

// THE USE OF ALLEGORY IN SHAABAN ROBERT'S PROSE WORKS. //

BY

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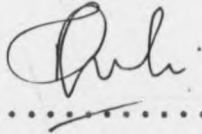


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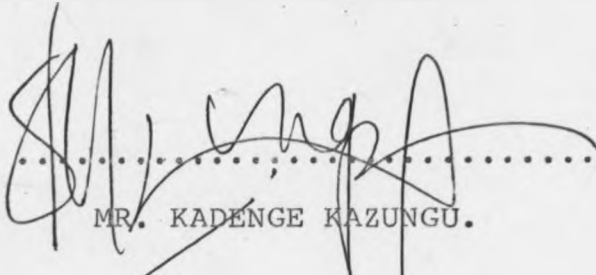
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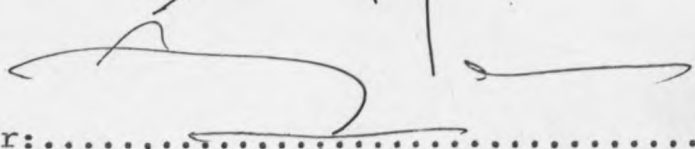
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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my grandfather Nicasio Makhanu Okhwa Namwinguli, who at 83, is still haunted by experiences on the colonial settler farms, to my father Nicholas Makhanu and my mother Rezpah Naliaka, who gave me the first slate and to the progress of Mbakalo area where we settled when it was a bush.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank Mr. Francis Imbuga, Mr. Osostsi Mtaali Ramenga and Mr. Austin Bukenya for recommending me for the award of the scholarship that enabled me to pursue the study of Literature at Masters' level. My special thanks go to my supervisors Mr. Kadenge Kazungu and Professor Chris L. Wanjala without whose guidance and committed interest in my work I would not have completed it. Dr. Chacha Nyaigotti Chacha of Kenyatta University showed constant interest in my work. He also provided me with vital journals from the Institute of Kiswahili Research, University of Dar es Salaam, which helped me to grasp the climate of Kiswahili literary scholarship. I thank him for all these. I thank Mr. Kitula King'ei for encouraging me to go on with the work. I thank my classmates for the inspiration they gave me to write on. It would be a grave mistake on my part if I forgot to thank the late Shaaban Robert himself whose artistic genius enabled me to have something to write about. My thanks also go to Mrs. Peninnah Rapasi for patiently and carefully typing the work.

My heartfelt gratitude also goes to my brothers Shadrack Nabiswa Makhanu, Gabriel Barasa Makhanu and the entire Makhanu family of thirty individuals for the moral support they gave me while writing this thesis. Finally, I thank my wife Margaret Nasimiyu Wafula for the last minute motivation she gave me to complete the work.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of allegory in Shaaban Robert's Adili na Nduguze, kusadikika, kufikirika, Utubora Mkulima and Siku ya Watenzi wote. The term allegory is described in general. Typical allegorical texts from the Greek antiquity to the present are traced and analyzed. Allegory is a technique of creating, translating or interpreting literary works so that they convey more than one level of meaning simultaneously.

Allegory operates at four levels of analysis in Shaaban Robert's prose. These are the personification, narrative, metaphorical and fabulous levels. Personification allegory is the use of proper-nouns in a descriptive way. In normal practice, proper-nouns lack literary semantic content. Most proper-nouns in Shaaban Robert's texts are used to describe qualities of persons and places. They do not necessarily work as labels that make those persons and places different from one another. At the level of narration, Robert portrays allegory as a symbolic story that serves as a disguised representation for meanings other than literal ones. It is, therefore, a study of the ways in which various elements combine in Shaaban Robert's prose to sustain their logic both at the literal and literary levels. Extended metaphors are used sparingly. They are also allegorical because their form is narrative. Lastly, the profusion of fabulous characters and situations helps the

writer to evoke a typically allegorical world.

As in all figurative language, allegory depends on the transference of meaning from one object or idea to another due to similarities between them. A hint of tenor created by the author helps to interpret an allegorical work. Allegory is also a para-linguistic literary device. Consequently, the identification and comprehension of the various ramifications of its context is important in interpreting and appreciating it.

This study reveals that the use of allegory leads to a deep insight into the author's work and world-view. Shaaban Robert's use of the mode is at its best in his early works, Adili na Nduguze, Kusadikika and Kufikirika, in which all aspects of allegory already identified are exhibited. Here, the author predicates the mode to his religious beliefs and uses it to preach an ethic based on his Islamic faith. Within this frame of reference, Shaaban Robert moulds flat characters who are representations of ideas in a society in which values are stable and static.

This trend changes in Utubora Mkulima and Siku ya Watenzi Wote. In these works, the writer gradually but firmly moves away from allegorical characters whose driving force is automation, to more realistic characters. While the ultimate 'articles of credo' of these realistic characters

subscribe to the writer's idealist vision, they are immediately motivated and guided by their free-will to act the way they do. The change of Shaaban Robert's mode of presentation is consonant with his changing perspectives of the world. As he faces new and greater challenges wrought by the grim reality of his society, he questions more radically the morality on which his society is based.



## Chapter One

### Shaaban Robert: An Introduction

A majority of Kiswahili prose writers use allegory to communicate the experiences, ideas and emotions of their time and age. Shaaban Robert, Euphrase Kezilahabi, Mohamed S. Mohamed, Said Mohamed, Shafi Adam Shafi, Katama Mkangi and Z. Burhani, just to mention some of them make unembarrassed use of allegory in their works. The preponderance of allegorical usages in these writers' texts make allegory a phenomenal stylistic device in Kiswahili prose fiction. The use of allegory in imaginative writing in Kiswahili has not received serious scholarly attention. What we have are brief, fleeting comments on specific authors, which are not inspired by a serious sense of scholarship, but written as guides to School Certificate examination candidates. Besides, the comments are scattered and found in isolation, relative to how examination set books which happen to use allegory have been selected. Consequently, guides for examination candidates lack a perspective and cannot therefore, lead to a fuller understanding of allegory.

The entire corpus of Kiswahili fiction is too enormous to be adapted for the present study. For the purpose of this thesis, Shaaban Robert's prose-works have been chosen. Of the well-known writers who use allegory in their texts, he is the oldest and so, a convenient point of departure of our study. We believe that by studying Shaaban Robert's use of allegory, we would have made a point from which later studies in the Kiswahili writer's use of allegory may take off. Shaaban Robert has twenty books to his name of which the authorship spans over a period of approximately thirty years. It is possible that these years witness a change of perspective and style. This is worth investigating. Through the study of Shaaban Robert's fiction, we intend not only to describe his use of allegory as a mode of literary expression, but also attempt explaining the possible factors that make him use allegory in his works. The purpose of this thesis is also to show how best we can understand Shaaban Robert's prose works through the examination of allegory used in them. Lastly, we will make a generalization about the style used by Shaaban Robert in the context of his entire imaginative prose with a view to ascertaining the relationship between his form and content.

Shaaban Robert is better known as a poet.<sup>2</sup> He has also written essays, an autobiography and a biography. All these are important in constructing the literary biography of the author. For the purpose of this thesis, however, we have chosen Shaaban Robert's five works of imaginative literature. These are: Adili na Nduguze, Kusadikika, Kufikirika, Utubora Mkulima and Siku ya Watenzi Wote. Our rationale for selecting these works is that allegory could be best manifested in them. All Shaaban Robert's works are written in Kiswahili. In this thesis, we only show their translation in English. This also applies to critical works in Kiswahili. The original texts will be shown in the appendix for the purpose of testing the authenticity of the translations.

Few critical comments have been made on Shaaban Robert's use of allegory. A.N. Shija argues that the use of allegory by Shaaban Robert is simplistic in the portrayal of characters and themes.<sup>3</sup> Shija argues dismisses the allegorical mode as used by Shaaban Robert on the basis of the fact that the mode predicates characters' roles to unchanging preconceived categorizations. The names of characters and places in Adili na Nduguze are, according to Shija, given connotatively

prior to their actual behaviour in life. This implies that they are predetermined and unrealistic. To Shija, allegory is an inappropriate vehicle for conveying human experience. Shija's dismissal of allegory is not valid because his analysis of the operation and evaluation of allegory lacks a perspective. He does not question himself why writers use certain literary devices. Besides, he does not distinguish between what is realistic and the non-realistic and whether the use of a non-realistic mode de facto makes a writer less effective.

T.S.Y. Sengo gives a clue as to Shaaban Robert's use of allegory to communicate his message.<sup>4</sup> This is not clear as he proceeds to review Kusadikika without alluding to its allegorical characteristics. That Sengo stumbles over the allegorical use of names is shown in his description of one character whose name means also what that character does.<sup>5</sup> Sengo does not seem to be particularly interested in Shaaban Robert's style, and so does not pursue his analysis to great depth.

The literary scene in Kiswahili, which should be the springboard for our thesis has little to offer on the subject of allegory. Kamusi Ya

Kiswahili Sanifu, the most recent Kiswahili dictionary to our knowledge, does not have a term that carries the same meaning as the English allegory. However, upcoming critics of literature in Kiswahili have coined terms which are close to our understanding of the term. Allamin Mazrui in Mwongozo Wa Mui Huwa Mwema na Uchambuzi wa Riwaya makes passing remarks on the language that Kiswahili prose writers use. In the process, he comes upon 'Majazi' and says:

'Majazi' is the use of names to illustrate the character or condition of a person or a city or the work of something. In S.A. Mohamed's novel, Asali Chungu the most dominant character's name is Dude. This is emblematic of the wretchedness of this character's condition and how he is taken for granted. But the writer of Kiswahili literature who has used 'Majazi' most extensively is Shaaban Robert.<sup>6</sup>

We believe that when Mazrui says 'Majazi', he means 'allegory' for as we will point out later, the personification of characters' and place-names is one of the attributes by which allegory is described. A work may be allegorical by virtue of its writer's use of personified characters and places. Despite Mazrui's acknowledgment that Shaaban Robert is a prolific user of allegory in Kiswahili prose fiction, he does not demonstrate how Shaaban Robert uses it practically, thereby ignoring its stylistic implications.

Senkoro's coinage differs from Mazrui's in that he translates 'Majazi' as 'Synecdoche' and defines it as follows: "This figure is a type of metaphor in which part of the referent is used to stand for the whole". The word he uses to describe allegory is 'istiara'. He describes it thus: "In practice, this figure refers to the use of narrative that employs symbols of which the meaning is revealed at another narrative level".<sup>8</sup> What is lacking on the Kiswahili literary critical scene is precision of terminology and in depth evocation of the world in which allegory operates. Mazrui associates allegory with the personification of names while Senkoro sees it as a basically narrative construct. There is also a non-uniformity in their use of their terms 'Majazi' and 'Istiara'. In this study, we will adopt the word 'majazi' because it is closest to our English understanding of 'allegory'. The word 'majazi' gives a mental impression of 'filling up', 'kujaza'<sup>9</sup>, evocative of an increasing breadth of vision in the process of allegorical interpretation. 'Istiara' on the other hand is akin to 'sitiri',<sup>10</sup> which implies 'to hide'. If this is translated in terms of a literary device 'Istiara', it does not in our view give the sense that is discerned in 'allegory'. 'Majazi', there-

fore, encompasses both Mazrui's and Senkoro's views. In analysing an allegorical name or story, the increasing breadth of meaning is visualized through associating the name or the story with other elements in context.

The foregoing review of critics of Shaaban Robert's prose in particular and Kiswahili literary criticism in general reveals that the term 'allegory' has not been adequately analysed in Kiswahili literary studies. Consequently, what other critics and writers elsewhere have done on allegory will elucidate the present study.

The word 'allegory' comes from the Greek 'allegoria:allos' which means 'other' and 'agoreuin' which means 'speak' respectively. It is a description of one thing as if it were another suggestively similar.<sup>11</sup> This etymological meaning is ambiguous in that it does not distinguish the specific characteristics of allegory from other figurative devices such as simile, metaphor and synecdoche, which rely on the likening of some objects to others.

Chamber's 20th Century Dictionary defines allegory as: "a narrative to be understood symbolically: a symbolical narration".<sup>12</sup> Oxford Advanced Learners'

Dictionary sees it as: " a story, painting or description in which ideas such as patience, purity and truth are symbolized by persons who are characters in the story".<sup>13</sup> Both Chamber's and Oxford Advanced dictionaries emphasize the personification of qualities as essential to the understanding of the meaning of allegory. Encyclopaedia Britannica is more detailed when it puts:

Allegory: intentional conveying by means of a symbol or an image of a further deeper meaning than the surface one. Allegory may be said to be extended metaphor worked out in many relationships. It is of greater length and complexity than parable or fable and is imaginative where analogy is rational.<sup>14</sup>

The elements of allegory which the encyclopaedia foregrounds are the use of symbols, extended metaphors, ~~the narrative~~ structure and the rationality of analogy.

Allegory in the West has been used to refer to so many and varied experiences of man that it can hardly be placed into a single conceptual rubric. Macqueen sees the origins of the mode in religion and philosophy.<sup>15</sup> Searching for allegory's ultimate origins, however, does not lead to any precise



answer, for as C.S. Lewis has pointed out, it is ingrained in the functioning of thought and language to represent what is immaterial in material terms.<sup>16</sup>

As a method of scriptural exposition, allegory is traced from the platonic and stoic interpretations of the Homeric epics. Both interpretations of the world subscribe the empirical to unchanging realities which are believed to exist in abstractions. The physical and the metaphysical worlds are perceptible at different levels of awareness. There is a way in which the platonist and the stoic can view the abstract in concrete impressions. Attempts to explain the physical as having corresponding metaphysical meanings or vice-versa is allegorical.

From about 600 B.C., Greek philosophers began to defend Homer as a sacred poet by inventing mystical significances of Homeric depictions of quarrelsome and drunken gods. What appeared to the human eye as scandalizing was given a corresponding analogical meaning. MacQueen gives the rape of Persephone by Dis, the god of under-world as an example.<sup>17</sup> It was interpreted as a mystical expression of sowing. Dis was conceived of as the earth in which the seed was buried and germinated.

A similarity between the Greek philosophers' dignified interpretation of Homer and the early rabbinical exegesis of some passages of The Bible exists. According to MacQueen, the early Fathers of the Church exonerated the erotic poetry of Songs of Solomon by giving it a mystical perception.<sup>18</sup> Solomon's love relationship with the Queen of Sheba was seen as representative of Christ's relationship with the Church.

Allegory may also refer to secular elements of classical rhetoric. This is, for instance, expressed in platonic dialogues. Plato was conscious of the transcendental nature of his reasoning and knowledge. As a result, he illustrates many of his pronouncements by analogical narratives and extended metaphors. This help in concretizing abstract discourses. In The Republic, the metaphor of the cave illustrates the impossibility of the soul of attaining complete knowledge so long as it is imprisoned by manacles of physical life.<sup>19</sup> The Phaedrus compares the human body to a charioteer driving two steeds, one standing for the spiritual and the other, the bodily elements in man. The charioteer, who represents reason, is supposed to be in control of these dialectic forces.<sup>20</sup>

An important part in the change of allegory from a rhetorical device to a method of literary writing seems to have been played by late classical poets such as Prudentius and Martianus Capella.<sup>21</sup> The writing of works that use personification allegory leads to the movement of allegory away from its static use as a weapon of rhetoric to the writing of imaginative allegorical literature that depicts corresponding relations on the philosophical level. Prudentius exhibits this element in The Psychomachia. The title of the poem literally means 'The Battle of the Soul'.<sup>22</sup> It describes a series of battles in which 'Faith' conquers 'idolatry', 'Patience' 'Anger', 'Shame' 'Passion' and 'Humility', 'Pride'. This use of allegory is taken over by writers such as Chaucer, Spenser and Bunyan in House of Fame, The Faerie Queene and The Pilgrim's Progress respectively.

C.S. Lewis argues that we must not suppose that in passing over centuries, between the sixth and twelfth century, we are leaving a series of allegorical poems in which it would be possible to trace a continuous development of The Psychomachia into House of Fame The Faerie Queene and The Pilgrim's Progress.<sup>23</sup> He maintains that these later allegories are original. They only owe to the past an atmosphere in which allegory was a natural method. Lewis' argument seems

to be valid in view of the fact that we cannot, for certain, establish the actual cross-influences that may have occurred among allegories of the middle ages and beyond. We believe that at the time of Chaucer, Spenser and Bunyan, allegory was a dominant mode of expression to which the most able and ambitious spirits of the age were irresistibly attracted. In this introduction we will rely basically on House of Fame, The Faerie Queene and The Pilgrim's Progress in our understanding of allegory not only because they are allegorical works par excellence<sup>24</sup> but also because they are relevant for our study. This does not, however, restrict our reference to other works where need be.

House of Fame is a love-vision. Besides Chaucer's inclusion in it of the story of Dido, he draws freely upon several Latin poets, historians and scientists. Chaucer declares that the purpose of the vision is to receive tidings of 'Love's folk'. As the action of the poem proceeds, its centre shifts from the affair of love to the vicissitudes of fame. Chaucer's pre-occupation is not the craving for worldly immortality; the concern of the dream is that Chaucer be snatched away from the monotony of his daily life and carried to the houses of Fame and Rumour, where he could hear tidings of love. We do not see what these tidings were to be

and matters of love do not dominate the poem.

The poem seems to depict Chaucer's discontent with the dull routine of his life or with the failure to win recognition. F.N. Robinson sees the vision as related to the events at court during Chaucer's time.<sup>25</sup> Accordingly, the tidings which Chaucer was to hear refer to the marriage of Richard to Anne. Such interpretation in Robinson's view derive support from mention of the 'man of gret auctorite' at the end of the poem. This interpretation points out that wherever a story or a narrative poem begs interpretative questions in its action, it is being allegorical.

The Pilgrim's Progress is about Christian salvation. Christian runs away from the City of Destruction and sets off to the celestial city. In the course of his pilgrimage he passes through the Slough of Despondent, the Interpreter's House, the Palace Beautiful, the Valley of Humiliation, the Valley of the Shadow of Death, Vanity Fair, Doubting Castle, the Delectable Mountains, the Country of Beulah and finally arrives at the celestial city. During the journey he meets characters such as Mr. Worldly

Wiseman, Faithful, Hopeful, Giant Despair and the Fiend Apollyn.

The Pilgrim's Progress is a literal expression of man's journey through temptations and sufferings on his way to heaven. Throughout the action of the story, which at times carries an overt conversational tone, Bunyan seems to argue that physical life is a necessary but basically transitory adjunct to the attainment of eternal life. In the story, ideas are symbolized by persons and places. Faithful, Christian and Hopeful are, for example, characters whose names carry semantic content. The narrative structure of the story is not only conceived of as a journey, but also rendered in such a way that for it to be understood in all its ramifications, other meanings additional to the meanings of the story as it appears have to be searched for.

Coleridge seems to be aware of this understanding of allegory when he defines it as: "The employment of a set of agents and images being so combined as to form a homogenous whole".<sup>26</sup> Coleridge is saying that for something which is always hidden in human expression to become clear, one has to deliberately invent visibilia to concretize it. The Pilgrim's

Progress testifies to the view that symbolized persons in allegory are arbitrary in that they are chosen to conform to the specific purposes of the author.

The Faerie Queene is pre occupied with man's struggle to overcome a world overshadowed with temptation and sin. This is depicted allegorically in the form of a quest. The dominant character in the poem is the Red Cross Knight. In his quest, the Knight encounters and fights against Error. The latter is killed and her body fed on by a brood. In the course of the journey, the Knight is separated from Una by the wiles of Archmago. Though the knight goes ahead to defeat Sansjoy, he becomes the willing tool of Duessa, whose father is an emperor. Duessa leads the knight to the House of Pride and hence to general corruption. In the House of Pride, the knight is attacked by Sansjoy and betrayed into the hands of Orgolio. He is rescued by Arthur, enters the House of Penance, where he repents his deviationism and sees the vision of perfect life.

Like in The Pilgrim's Progress, The Faerie Queene depicts characters and places of which the names are significant. These two texts reveal that the use of meaningful names is one of the characteristics by which

an allegorical piece of work is identified. Hamilton argues that the episode of the Red Cross knight's sojourn in the House of Pride where defeats Sansjoy who is then delivered to hell to be cured of his wounds is translated into spiritual terms as the Christian gentleman's being tempted by joylessness.<sup>27</sup> This interpretation emanates from the moral allusions hidden under the poem's surface. We concur with Hamilton's interpretation because in the action of The Faerie Queene, the combat is between what is good in the moral sense and what is evil, personified in the characters we are presented with. Here again, the analogical significance of the text is got through appreciating its allegorical import.

House of Fame, The Pilgrim's Progress and The Faerie Queene illustrate that what goes into allegory's composition is the clothing of an idea into a garb. It is presumptuous, however, to attempt establishing the writer's 'original' consciousness or lack of it in writing allegory.<sup>28</sup> What matters is the range of possible meanings a given story is disposed to exhibit. This is derived from correspondences between mimesis and meaning. It is against this background that we argue that the four levels of scriptural reading of the medieval scholar need not be dogmatic. For even if, as Dante points out,



that scriptural reading requires of the commentator four levels of interpretation, there is a sense in which each one of them has a direct link with its literal precedent.<sup>29</sup> So long as a hint of continuity of relationships is allowed to peep through the story or poem and provide clues as to its other meanings, the reader will identify these other meanings.

From the foregoing analysis, the allegorical mode is founded on a dual ontological universe. House Fame, The Faerie Queene and The Pilgrim's Progress show a relation between the surface text and its other moral meanings. In literary analysis meaning is seen as something different from surface-matter. The allegory exposes links by which actions in one level are made understandable in another. Plaks' overview of several definitions of allegory as given by some scholars emphasize the trait of duality.<sup>30</sup> Religious definitions tend to view allegory as a way of reaching out to the spiritual.<sup>31</sup> Others stress the interpretation of a work at more than one level of understanding without subjecting that interpretation to mystical connotations.<sup>32</sup> The increasing levels of complexity in the less spiritual definitions tend more towards the abstract than the mystical. In this thesis, we will incorporate the more down-to-

earth definitions of allegory in our understanding of the mode because the significance of literary style of which allegory is a part is concrete.

At present, allegory can be subsumed to various forms. We have satire in Animal Farm and an existentialist view of the world in The Plague. Animal Farm can be read as a story about animals which impose a dictatorship upon others. When the literary history of the work is underlined, animals become representations of human beings. Consequently the book becomes an attack on totalitarianism. Albert Camus' The Plague on the other hand relates the story about the plague which infests the town of Oran in the early 1940s. In view of the period when the book is set and the various clues that show in its action, The Plague depicts the German occupation of France. The state of Emergency which precipitates restriction of movement is akin to a war situation. Camus also portrays the formation of resistance groups to fight against the plague. On a deeper level, these are not just resistance groups meant to fight against the disease; they are groups meant to combat the German invasion. Eventually, Camus sees every force that makes nonsense of man's striving to lead a life of realized hopes as a manifestation of the plague.<sup>33</sup> The plague and the various fighting groups that come into being to combat it can

be seen in terms of the German occupation. As characters such as Tarrou introspect into their past, the German scourge becomes one of the multifarious problems that man is bound to face once in the world. The plague symbolizes problems, both immediate and ultimate that man has to fight against continually in a violent world. The historical plague, its symbolic connotation of the German occupation and its overall a historical reference to the radical problems that face man is grasped through the story as it is told and its other underlying meanings.

Our analysis reveals that an increasing breadth of interpretation is basic in understanding the operation of allegory in practice. Even on the African literary scene in English and French, works such as The Radiance of The King by Camara Laye and Two Thousand Seasons by Ayi Kwei Armah need knowledge of the mode of allegory to be understood and appreciated. The Radiance of the King is about Clarence, a man in search of his godhead. Clarence undergoes the African experience and is transformed as a result. Like the main characters of House of Fame, The Pilgrim's Progress and The Faerie Queene, the hero of The Radiance of The King is defined by motivations and acts which go beyond his immediate requirements.

Camara Laye's novel is allegorical because its storyline is comprehensible at more than one level of interpretation. The one question that pre-occupies Clarence as he journeys to the South is whether he would be accepted to work for the king regardless of his skin pigmentation. In his journey, he encounters obstacles which include the 'wall' of people he has to penetrate in order to reach the esplanade and his ignorance of the surroundings of his quest.

Clarence's search is related to Camara Laye's belief in cultural synthesis . Clarence's experiences are the writers vehicle of depicting the African way of life and what an alien must go through in order to be accommodated by it. The need to be aware of allegory in order to understand what Laye says is ably put by Gikandi: "Laye's narrative demands that we collate his character's experiences with both their real world situations and the values that underlie them to a full understanding of the same." <sup>34</sup>

Two Thousand Seasons is another work of imaginative prose on the African scene which is allegorical in rendering. Besides the names of some of Armah's characters bearing significance, the narrative exhibits allegorical characteristics. Characters' names such as

Isanusi<sup>35</sup> and Noliwa<sup>36</sup> are adapted from the South African novel, Chaka by Thomas Mofolo. The outstanding leadership roles that these characters carry out in Chaka are re-incarnated in Two Thousand Seasons. The narrative, is on the other hand, about a group of people who against all odds choose to fight for their rights. Although Two Thousand Seasons is set in the past, its message is relevant to the present African situation. Armah is suggesting that just as some Africans of yore chose to resist against slave traders and colonialist invaders, the present Africans should resist economic and cultural colonialism by emulating some of the methods used by Armah's heroes.

The need to give allegory tangibility makes symbols indispensable in its composition. Allegory is sometimes confused with symbol. Confusion arises because both these dimensions involve more than a literal meaning. Frye, Lewis and Huppe argue that the direction of movement in the creation of allegory and symbol is the source of the difference.<sup>37</sup> While the symbolist, they maintain, begins with a concrete sign and moves toward an abstract idea, the user of allegory begins from a bare idea and clothes it in concretized flesh. Plaks sees the difference in the way allegory and symbol operate in a literary work.<sup>38</sup> Allegory, he argues, involves narratives

in which formal patterns of comprehensibility interwoven in the text refer to patterns not directly given. On the other hand, he holds that symbols refer to individual figures that evoke the possibility of external reference. From this point, Plaks deduces that so long as Spenser's Mammon in The Faerie Queene is alone in his cave, he is a symbol. The moment he tests Guyon, he enters the allegorical structure. Clifford's views fit in with Plaks when she argues that symbols tend to be static while allegory is dynamic.<sup>39</sup> In symbol, she attests, all names are focused within the symbol. Contrariwise, an overriding sense of coherence and Kinesis characterises allegory. She concludes that in allegory, the concern is always with the way in which elements combine in a narrative form. Symbols need not be connected by narrative.

The most apt distinction between symbol and allegory in this thesis is that whereas allegory and symbol may be denoted by the same figure, their operation in the discursive or a poetic structure distinguishes them. We agree with Plaks and Clifford when they attest that symbols are basically static while the dynamic way in which figures combine in a structure lends them allegorical attributes.

Our discussion of writers and critics of works that use allegory shows that allegory uses extended and extensive personifications and personified abstractions. Besides the formal features of allegory are subscribed to didactic purposes or preconceived mental constructs. In The Faerie Queene and The Pilgrim's Progress, the writers intend to teach their readers moral lessons. The journey, battle or conflict seem from our analysis to be the fundamental form of allegory. These journeys, quests, battles or conflicts lead to transformation on the part of the main characters. This is specifically in reference to Western users of allegory such as Chaucer, Bunyan and Spenser. Christian in The Pilgrim's Progress feels completely free from the fears of the City of Destruction when he arrives at the Celestial City. In The Faerie Queene, the Knight unravels the secret of overcoming sin and temptation in the House of Penance.

The fact that the writer, who uses allegory, is didactically charged shows that apart from allegory being a mode of expression that uses structured analogy, it presupposes the writing of a particular type of literature, making assumptions about its functions and how it is read. This makes any comments in the

introduction and action of the work with regard to the writer's expectations of the reader important. The views of writers of allegory are important since these are attributes by which the mode is identified and defined. Allegory operates best as a mode of moralizing since it begins from the assumption that readers are ready to learn. A writer of allegory takes for granted that it is part of his work to help the reader in introspecting and deciding. That seems to be the reason why he is not embarrassed by referring repeatedly to a catalogue of his beliefs or communal convictions. Authorial statements of belief are supposed to provide a hint of tenor by which the surface structure of a text is related to its underlying meaning.

Having examined some of the basic features of allegory in general, we are better prepared to study how Shaaban Robert uses allegory to communicate his ideas. In this study, allegory will be seen as a technique of creating, translating or interpreting literary works so that they convey more than one level of meaning all at the same time. This will be seen at four levels of analysis. At the level of narration, it is a one to one correspondence of the story as it appears literally and its literary significance.



Allegory will also be seen in the usage of characters' names. In normal practice, people's names lack literary semantic content because they are proper-nouns. In this thesis, however, whenever a character's name carries meaningful connotations within a given narrative context, we regard the name allegorical. We will also envision any usage of extended metaphor as an element of allegory. Finally we will consider fabulous elements, wherever they appear, an inextricable part of the allegorical structure. This is because dominant characters in the works we have reviewed encounter monstrous, fabulous and super-natural agencies most of the time. In House of Fame, Chaucer is carried to the houses of fame and Rumour by an eagle. In The Pilgrim's Progress and The Faerie Queene, Christian and the Knight fight monstrous and super-natural battles against forces that represent evil respectively.

In our study of Shaaban Robert's prose-works, we want to test if the writer's linguistic choices are deliberately made for conveying his message. We postulate that Shaaban Robert expresses his message strongly and gives a deeper insight into it through : the use of allegory. We will also find out the influence of time on Shaaban Robert's use of allegory.

For our study to be effective, we will look at Shaaban Robert's use of allegory from a stylistic perspective. This is because, allegory being basically a mode of expression, its analysis and comprehension is stylistic. David Crystal and Derek Davy, S.H.Olsen and E. Ngara attest that a writer's style is an individual and creative utilization of the resources of language which his period, his chosen dialect and his purposes within it offer him.<sup>40</sup> To Cluysenaar, the purpose of style is to create a mental set which makes the artist look for certain aspects in a scene around him which he can render.<sup>41</sup> Through style, she proceeds, we are able to see the consciousness of the writer and the reality of which it is a witness. This thesis is in agreement with the above stated sentiments because they embody our understanding of literature.

In allegory as in all figurative language, interpretation depends upon the transference of meaning from some objects to others due to similarities that exist between them. As G. Leech observes, a hint of tenor should be allowed to peep through and give the reader a springboard for interpretation.<sup>42</sup> But being an "affective para-linguistic"<sup>43</sup> device, allegory cannot be effectively analysed in terms of linguistic description alone because some of its connotations can only be

grasped psychologically. These connotations are got through the 'sympathetic weather' that creates them which includes not only the historical, geographical and philosophical context of the author, but also the internal consistency of the figurative uses of language that he adopts.

This thesis believes that a stylistic approach to criticism enables the reader to comprehend the meaning of the text and the sensibilities of an author as shown in his work. As Hough observes:

The claim of stylistics rests essentially on the proposition that the farthest ranges of a writer's art, the depth of his emotional experience, the height of his spiritual insight are expressed only through his words and can be apprehended on through an examination of his verbal art.<sup>44</sup>

This is an approach that does not see aspects of style of a work of art in isolation from its content. Ngara calls this approach 'Stylistic Criticism'.<sup>45</sup> He spells out its tenets as follows:

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We are not merely concerned with what is idiosyncratic about a writer, but equally with the effect of his manner of presentation, and with the relationship between language and content.<sup>46</sup>

Our thesis adopts this approach because it believes the approach is comprehensive enough to account for the aspects of style that we will deal with. In this thesis, we will identify an allegory. We will then analyse it in terms of the works being studied. Finally, we want to correlate the various applications of allegory as exemplified in chosen texts with a view to ascertaining what they tell us about the themes and style of Shaaban Robert. The next chapter examines Shaaban Robert's literary biography as a prelude of the actual concern of this thesis.

END NOTES

1. Some of these study-guides include:
  - (a) J.M. Mutinda, Mwongozo Wa kusadikika, Nairobi:  
Stellagraphics Limited, 1988
  - (b) G.K. Kingei, Mwongozo wa Kusadikika, Nairobi:  
Heinemann Kenya Limited, 1988.
  - (c) Amina Vuzo, Mwongozo wa Nyota ya Rehema, Nairobi:  
Heinemann Kenya Limited, 1986.
  - (d) Alfred Kigwe, Mwongozo wa Mui Huwa Mwema, Nairobi:  
Stellagraphics Educational Books, 1988
2. Mojola Mbele, Ed. Viewpoints: Essays on Literature and Drama, Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau  
1980, p.14
3. Farouk Topan, Ed. Uchambuzi wa Maandishi ya Kiswahili, Dar es Salaam: Oxford University  
Press, 1971. p.1
4. T.S.Y. Sengo, Shaaban Robert: Uhakiki wa Maandishi Yake, Dar es Salaam: Longman, Tanzania Limited,  
1975, p.57
5. Ibid., p.57
6. Allamin Mazrui, Mwongozo wa Mui Mwema na Uchambuzi wa Riwaya, Nairobi : Longman, 1981, p. 18. <sup>Huwa</sup>
7. F.E.M. Senkoro, Fasihi, Dar es Salaam; Press and  
Publicity Centre, 1982, p.15
8. Ibid., p.15

9. Kamusi Ya Kiswahili Sanifu, Dar es Salaam:

Op.Cit; p.86

There are several meanings of 'jaa'. But the one from which we derive 'jaza', 'to be spread' or 'to be filled' is one that is relevant for this thesis.

10. A.F. Scott, Current Literary Terms,

London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Limited,  
1965, p.1

11. Ibid, p. 263

12. E.M. Kirkpatrick, Ed. Chamber's 20th Century Dictionary,

Ahemdabad; Allied Publishers Private Limited,  
1983, p.31

13. A.S. Honrby, Ed. Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of

Current English, Nairobi: Oxford University Press,  
1973, p.23

14. The Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. I, Chicago: William

Benton, 1768, p.64

15. John MacQueen, The Critical Idiom: Allegory, Norfolk:

Methuen and Company Limited, 1970, p.1

16. C.S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love

London: Oxford University Press, 1936, p.44

17. Op.Cit., p. 1-2

18. Ibid, p.20

19. Plato, The Republic (Translated with Introduction by

H.D.P. Leep). Harmondsworth; Penguin, 1960,

p.278

20. Plato, The Phaedrus (Translated with introduction and commentary by H. Hackforth). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952, p.69-71
21. A.H. Plaks, Archetype and Allegory in the Dream of The Red Chamber, Princeton and Guidford: Princeton University Press, 1976, p.86
22. The Encyclopaedia Britannica Vol.1, Op.Cit., P.64
23. C.S. Lewis, Op. Cit., p.84
24. In analysing the concept 'allegory', The New Columbia Encyclopaedia, Collier's Encyclopaedia, Encyclopaedia Britannica and Encyclopaedia Americana mention The Pilgrim's Progress and Faerie Queene as typical allegorical works. House of Fame is not directly referred to but Chaucer's works are generally. Arnold Kettle in Introduction to the English Novel uses The Pilgrim's Progress, allegorical structure to illustrate an important point in the evolution of the English novel. The Pilgrim's Progress, among other works, was translated into Kiswahili in 1889 long before Shaaban Robert's started writing his fictional prose. The possibility of cross-influences between the Pilgrim's Progress and Shaaban Roberts fiction makes the use of The Pilgrim's Progress important.

25. F.N. Robinson, The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer,  
Cambridge; Riverside Press, 1951, p.281
26. A.F. Scott, Op.Cit., p.6
27. A.C. Hamilton, The Structure of Allegory in the  
Faerie Queene, Oxford, Clarendon Press,  
1961, p.8
28. Clifford Gay, The Transformations of Allegory,  
London and Basingstok; Routledge and  
Paul Kegan, 1974, p.43
29. John MacQueen, Op. Cit, p.54
30. A.H. Plaks, Op.Cit, p.88
31. Definitions (ii), (iii) and (iv) project an  
overly religious point of view:
  - (ii) "...a vision, an explicit act of spirit which  
transforms but does not vaporize the image of  
concrete reality"
  - (iii) "...Reference to man's ultimate destiny or  
meaning, perhaps his relation to super-natural  
Being - usually in some ancient similitude or  
element accustomed to bear the bruden of this  
reference"
  - (iv) "The tradition of allegory is in religious terms  
the spirit of gnosticism, in which the objects  
of perception have value only as they lead  
towards the ineffable, towards salvations  
through wisdom - as they are clues to the  
spiritualized non-tangible essence of the universe".



(v) "...The reality of relations which prevail between separate orders of existence".

32. A more concrete view of allegory is shown in the definitions (i), (vii), (viii) and (ix):

(i) "Start with an immaterial fact... and then invent visibilia to express it".

(vii) "...to make you feel that the two levels of being correspond to one another in detail, and indeed that there is some underlying reality, something in the nature of things which makes this happen."

(viii) "We have actual allegory when a poet explicitly indicates the relationship of his images to examples and precepts".

(ix) "A writer is being allegorical when it is clear that he is saying "by this, I also mean that."

33. Albert Camus, The Plague, (Translated from French by Staurt Gilbert), Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1960, (In the introduction).

34. Simon Gikandi, Reading the African Novel, Nairobi: Heinemann Kenya, 1987, p.4

35. Isanusi is a great medicineman in Thomas Mofolo's novel. He re-appears in Two Thousand Season as a leader of a band of querillas fighting for the 'way' that Armah admires most.

36. Noliwa in Mofolo's novel resembles Dingiswayo's elder sister - the sister who saves Dingiswayo in times of danger. She is also a great participant in fighting for the 'way' in Two Thousand Seasons.
37. A.H. Plaks, Op.Cit, p.90
38. Ibid., p. 92-93
39. Clifford Gay, Op.Cit., p. 11-13
40. David Crystal and Derek Davy, Investing English Style, London; Longman Group Limited, 1969, p.9
- S.H. Olsen, The Structure of Literary Understanding, Enkvist; Oxford University Press, 1964, p.12
- Emmanuel Ngara, Stylistic Criticism and The African Novel, London; Heinemann, 1982, p.35
41. Anne Cluysenaar, Introduction to Literary Stylistics, London; B.T. Batsford Limited, 1976, p. 30-31
42. Geoffrey Leach, A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry, Essex; Longman Group Limited, 1969, p.163
43. Emmanuel Ngara, Op.Cit., p.17
44. Ibid., p.14
45. Graham Hough, Style and Stylistics, London; Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969, p.39.
46. Op.Cit., p.35

## Chapter Two

### Shaaban Robert: Literary Biography and Ideas

In the last chapter, we saw the objectives of this thesis and the theoretical background to it. We argued that in the absence of literary critical works on the use of allegory on the Kiswahili literary scene worth of serious attention, it was imperative to find out what other writers and critics elsewhere have said on the same subject. The last chapter forms the conceptual basis of our study.

In this chapter, we will examine Shaaban Robert's literary biography and ideas. The rationale for examining Shaaban Robert's literary biography and ideas in general is that we believe that a writer's life and beliefs have a bearing on his works. On 'Literature and Biography', Rene Wellek and Austin Warren say:

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LIBRARY

The most obvious cause of a work of art is its creator, the author; and hence and explanation in terms of the personality and life of the writer has been one of the oldest and best established methods of literary study.<sup>1</sup>

Our intention is neither to test that: "biography has been one of the oldest and best established methods of literary study", nor to explain Shaaban Robert's works in "terms of his personality". We, however, argue that Shaaban Robert's literary biography helps to explain and illuminate his works. In constructing the literary biography of Shaaban Robert, we will draw from his biographers, J.W. T.Allen<sup>2</sup> and Yussuf Ulenge<sup>3</sup>. We will also depend on relevant information by Shaaban Robert himself and his critics.

Born in 1909 at Vibambani near Tanga, Shaaban Robert was one of those who referred to themselves as Waswahili. This is because the language and cultural heritage with which he identifies himself is Kiswahili. A Myao by tribe, Shaaban Robert throughout his writings prides himself in his African origins. His Father's real name was Ufukwe. Ufukwe was also called Robert after the German employer of his father. Hence Shaaban was also called Robert after his grandfather. Shaaban Robert's parents divorced immediately after his birth. It appears, however, that they continued to meet young Robert as he grew up:

His father was called Robert  
Juma Ufukwe. His mother was

Mwema Binti Mwidau. They loved and trusted him. Above all, they taught him core aspects of their customs and traditions.<sup>4</sup>

Shaaban Robert himself married twice. His first wife died leaving him a daughter and a son. He married again and had four children. Other sources indicate that Shaaban Robert married thrice and had ten children.<sup>5</sup>

Shaaban Robert went to school in Dar es Salaam from 1922 to 1926. He was the second of the eleven candidates that sat and passed School Leaving Certificate. With little formal learning, Shaaban Robert educated himself from personal drive and effort.

He worked as a clerk for the colonial government. Between 1926 and 1944, Shaaban Robert worked at the Income Tax Section, Tanga and other unknown places. In 1944, he left the Income Tax Section and went to the Department of Wildlife, where he stayed until 1946. From there, he served in the Office of the Head of Tanga Region between 1946 and 1952. Finally, he worked at the office of Survey, Tanga from 1952 upto 1959 when he retired.

Shaaban Robert was loved by colleagues and respected by superiors, due to his character of moral

integrity and warm-heartedness. Even then, despite his hard work, he was not promoted to a higher rank or paid consonant with his zeal at work. At the time of his retirement, he had hardly saved enough money to live on. Shaaban Robert speaks bitterly about this in his autobiography.

My work as a civil servant  
was blessed by many transfers,  
but advancement was rare.  
I was transferred from department  
to department, with the rank of  
a simple clerk.<sup>6</sup>

As we have already pointed out, Shaaban Robert wrote both prose and poetry. He also wrote essays which, in Kiswahili prose, was a new genre. He tried his hand at miscellaneous compositions of prose and poetry within the same volume and did translations as well. His poetic compositions and the times during which they were composed are as follows: Utenzi wa Vita vya Uhuru (1939-1945), Koja La Lugha (1945-1946), Almasi za Afrika (1946-62), Pambo La Lugha (1946), Ashiki Kitabu Hiki (1946-1960), Sanaa ya Ushairi (1946-1960), Tenzi za Marudi Mema (1949), Mwafrika Aimba (1946-62), Mashairi ya Shaaban (1950-61) and Mapenzi Bora (1957-58). Miscellaneous compositions containing prose and poetry within the same volume include:

Maisha yangu na Baada ya miaka Hamsini (1936 & 1946), Insha na Mashairi (1958), MaSomo Yenye Adili (1958), and Kielezo Cha Fasili (1962 - 1959). The Lisbon Earthquake, a poem contained in the second part of Koja La Lugha is a translated work. Prose productions of Shaaban Robert and their times of authorship include: Kusadikika (1948), Kufikirika (1946-47) Adili na Nduguze (1951), Utubora Mkulima (1960-1961), Wasifu Wa Siti Binti Saad (1958) and Siku ya Watenzi Wote (1960-1961). Shaaban Robert died in June 1962.

We intend to show the major experiences under which Shaaban Robert lived and in turn demonstrate how these may have influenced his artistic work. These experiences are the political, literary and religious climate of the time.

After the Germans were defeated in the World War I, Tanganyika became a mandated territory under the British. The British propagated ideas which were aimed at instilling in the indigenous people the view that colonialism was legitimate. Through Indirect Rule which was introduced in 1925, the Colonial government sought in theory to communicate to the colonized on an equal footing. In practice, however, Africans were unfairly treated at all levels of administration. As we will see presently, Shaaban Robert was enchanted by the fact that he was a British

citizen. This seems to be the inspiration of his poetic composition, Utenzi wa Vita Vya Uhuru.

From Shaaban Robert's autobiography, he becomes a poet as a result of the events of the Second World War. Robert attests that he is anxious to write about every event about or that results from the war. Apart from being a contemporary of the participants of the war, he sees it as a personal responsibility to report the procedure of the war to the best of his knowledge. Jan Knappert has the following to say on the Utenzi:

This work, Utenzi Wa Vita Vya Uhuru is Shaaban Robert's longest work. He narrates in 300 stanzas the history of the Second World War. ... This epic demonstrated unequivocally that Africans were also affected by the war even though, not to the extent that the Europeans were emotionally and psychically. The longest artistic work of its kind in Kiswahili, it depicts in detail the response of a respectable African of his community to the history of the war...<sup>7</sup>

Shaaban Robert himself talks at length about the war in the autobiography:



When Adolf Hitler declared the war  
in 1939, the world of poetry  
demanded of me to sing about  
the whole episode of the war.  
I tried to evade this call, but  
I was overcome by the urge to compose.  
... I had no proper excuse  
to sit back and watch the  
war from the periphery like a  
dumb person. The war was a  
universal concern. I was part  
and parcel of the world community;  
So I was obliged to participate  
in the war in any form I could. <sup>8</sup>

In the poem, Shaaban Robert lauds the British struggle to 'keep the world safe for democracy'. On the other hand, he castigates the Germans, their allies and even neutral nations such as India in the most abusive of terms. This spirit seems to guide Shaaban Robert's early works; despite his protest against the injustices that are perpetrated to himself in particular and to the Africans in general, he does not find difficulties in accommodating himself in the British Monarchy. His reason for castigating Hitler during the war illustrates this:

I was a British citizen  
and an enemy of the  
Germans during the war. <sup>9</sup>

After completing the composition of the epic, Shaaban Robert writes:

The name of Isherwood in this book is a sign of respect for his virtues and good manners. It has been written by his faithful servant.<sup>10</sup>

A.A.M. Isherwood was the Head of the Department of Education in the territory of Tanganyika. Some poems in Koja La Lugha<sup>11</sup>, Ashiki Kitabu Hiki<sup>12</sup>, Kielezo cha Fasili<sup>13</sup> and Mwafrika Aimba depict Shaaban Robert's protest against colonial rule and forces that deter human beings from realizing their highest potential. But at the same time, he supports the monarchy and takes its existence for granted. In Adili na Nduguze, Kusadikika and Kufikirika, his works on social reform, Shaaban Robert attacks colonial conservatism and dictatorship. He, however, does this within the parameter of Kingship. He may question the legitimacy of Prime Ministers and their policies as in the case of Kusadikika and Kufikirika, but he does not for a moment question the absolute legitimacy of the monarchy. As it will become clear in the course of this thesis, it was the colonial policy to censure the writing of all subversive literature for it would instigate

indigenous people to fight against colonial rule. This perhaps explains Shaaban Robert's tolerance of the monarchy and why in some instance he adopts non-realistic modes to communicate indirectly his disenchantment with some of the colonial policies.

Kusadikika, in particular seems to be modelled on the actual events of the history of Tanganyika. In 1922, when Shaaban Robert was a youth, Kayamba founded The Tanganyika Territory Civil Service Association - a welfare association for civil servants, which sought to help civil servants solve their problems within the established colonial machinery. This appears to be the point of departure of opposition to the colonial system within the established colonial parameters.

The chiefs who were appointed by the colonial government in Tanganyika were loathed by indigenous people. The main reason for this was that they were used by the government to fuel quarrels among people with regard to land issues. In particular, people in many parts of the country had grievances against government's land utilisation and soil rehabilitation programmes. One instance associated with these programmes is the evacuation of the Meru from their ancestral lands. On being evicted,

these people protested, arguing that the action was unfair. They formed The Meru Citizens Union under the leadership of Japheth Kirilo, who was also the secretary of Tanganyika African Association, Arusha branch. The union tried in vain to solve the land issue. Eventually, Kirilo resolved to travel all over Tanganyika informing people of the injustices that had been perpetrated against the Meru. This case awakened the inhabitants of Tanganyika and as a result, they began forming a united front in a bid to fight against colonialism.

The Meru case appears to be the motivation of Shaaban Robert's poetry which lauds the formation of political associations on the part of Africans.<sup>15</sup> Besides, two of Robert's prose works, Kusadikika and Kufikirika attack and satirize systems of administration that are unjust and conservative. Robert's aversion to the colonial system is even more strongly underlined in part two of his Maisha Yangu na Baada Ya Miaka Hamsini. Written in 1946, ten years after the first part, the spirit that informs its content is

the same as the one we find in Kusadikika and Kufikirika. Here, Shaaban Robert's commitment to the African cause is unambiguous. He is proud to see the African forming his political party. The overall impression that Shaaban Robert creates is that he is an active participant of the current affairs of his time:

My heart melted like snow  
in the sun in response to the  
many happenings that were  
taking place in the country.  
It was my role and  
respectable of me to help  
in development programmes  
the way others were doing.<sup>16</sup>

Shaaban Robert's participation in the political events of his time is historically proven; in 1947 when the Chairman of Tanganyika African Association, the precursor of Tanganyika African National Union gave his speech in English, Shaaban Robert translated it into Kiswahili on the spur of the moment.<sup>17</sup>

Shaaban Robert's expectations of the results of political independence on the part of the African are similar to those of most African writers at the time. Independence is seen as a landmark in the history of the African. This excitement motivates

the author to write on the events that forestall the apocalypse of colonial rule and the onset of a rule based on the equality of all human beings:

The demand for justice shook the hearts of all the people wherever they were. In Uganda, Kenya, Tanganyika, Zanzibar and in fact on the entire African continent, people demanded for independence.<sup>18</sup>

At this juncture, Shaaban Robert also divulges the plight of the Blacks in South Africa, which leads him to state his stand on human beings of various races. He argues that if his solicitation for the independence of Black South Africans results merely in the dissolution of apartheid, the contribution would not be wasted effort on his part.<sup>19</sup> Shaaban Robert is in this instance like Peter Abrahams in Mineboy for both contemplate the establishment of a society without colour.

It is this pre-occupation with the liberation of mankind from political oppression that motivates Shaaban Robert to deplore the under privileged condition of women. In Koja La Lugha, he reveals that women are poor.<sup>20</sup> He testifies that since women are weak, it is obligatory for them to be helped. Shaaban Robert does not, however, examine the root cause that

leads to this situation. In another poem, "Mwanamke si Kiatu",<sup>21</sup> he incisively attacks men who think that they are superior to women. Wasifu Wa Siti Binti Saad is Robert's testament on the self-reliant woman who is comensurate with contemporary society. Siti becomes a consummate singer and presenter of songs in an environment which is socially out of harmony with such practice. To Shaaban Robert, the courage that Siti manifests in transcending the limitations of her society is the kind that every real innovator and revolutionary should imitate. T.S.Y. Sengo is quoted as commending Wasifu Wa Siti in the following way:

... Wasifu Wa Siti Binti Saad is a portraiture par excellence of humane traits. Apart from showing the kind of woman we want in East Africa, we are shown that every person has a talent, that determination is the key to development and when one fails, the panacea is not to give up but to be even more determined.<sup>22</sup>

This sums up Siti's life, for although she is discouraged and satirized against by enemies, she does not give up exploiting her talent. In Insha na Mashairi, on "Mwanamke Wa Sasa",<sup>23</sup> Shaaban Robert lauds the liberation of women that is sweeping across the world. He is quoted as saying:

The place of a woman is not just to obey. She wants equality both in public service and in law. Today's woman is a rebel<sup>24</sup>

While he sees this as positive, he is in complete disagreement with the uncritical imitation of all men's actions by some women. He maintains that it is not development to imitate some actions that men do just for the sake of proving that they are equal. Evil practices in men need to be stripped off and not to be imitated. The attributes that Shaaban Robert demands of a good woman are shown in "Mke Mwema".<sup>25</sup> These are intelligence, patience and wisdom; the same attributes that Robert looks for in a good man.

With the intensification of the struggle for independence on the African continent, Shaaban Robert not only celebrated the anticipated results of the struggle but also thought about the kind of society that would be established after independence. Utubora Mkulima was written at the same time as Siku Ya Watenzi Wote. But because the themes that Shaaban Robert deals with in Siku Ya Watenzi Wote are more visionary, it seems Utubora Mkulima is an earlier work.



Utubora Mkulima attacks the colonial society based on the money economy and its concomitant evils of urbanisation and congestion, which according to Shaaban Robert denaturalize man. In this work, the author does not mention government organs that control the economy. Nonetheless, it is apparent that the attack is directed against the colonial government for it is the government contemporary with Shaaban Robert. Utubora Mkulima idolizes rural values and affirms the nobility and necessity of labour and self-reliance. Although Utubora Mkulima was written between 1960 and 1961, it does not probe questions related to the impending political independence of Tanganyika.

Siku Ya Watenzi Wote is reserved for these questions. In this work, Shaaban Robert is pre-occupied with the kind of society that is to be established after political independence. The writer imagines a Tanganyika years after independence. Problems of destitution, exploitation and moral depravity plague the young nation. To solve these problems, Shaaban Robert conceptualizes a "community of morality," which he proposes will solve the country's ills. Siku Ya Watenzi Wote testifies Robert's disenchantment with the oncoming Uhuru of Tanganyika

in favour of this 'Community of Morality'. M.M. Mulokozi seems to have the explanation to this:

Even as he wrote, Shaaban Robert was aware of the great upheavals that were taking place in Africa and the world. The colonial system was being shaken to its very foundations through armed and political struggle. Four years earlier, Ghana under Nkrumah had won political independence... The Congo (Zaire) having achieved Independence was now going through one of the most tragic and painful experiences in her history, which culminated in the murder of Lumumba and in the death of an estimated two million people. Within a year, Tanganyika was to win her independence soon to be followed by Kenya and Uganda... Given this social political situation, Shaaban Robert was concerned with what would happen after Uhuru. What sort of society should be built so that East Africans do not suffer a tragedy like that of the Congo? His Utopia was intended to answer this question.<sup>26</sup>

The foregoing passages show the political influence under which Shaaban Robert writes. The literary climate that affects Shaaban Robert's work revolves around our examination of Kiswahili as a language of literacy and literature in the colonial context. Before 1900, the development of Kiswahili in the Latin alphabet was a missionary effort monopoly.<sup>27</sup> In 1925, under the auspices of the colonial government.

a meeting was convened in Dar es Salaam with a view to identifying an indigenous language that would be used as a medium of communication in schools in Tanganyika. Because Kiswahili had spread more than any other indigenous language, it was readily chosen. It was then imperative for Kiswahili to be standardized.

After the 1925 meeting, The Central Publishing Committee was established. Its role was to be informed on matters pertaining to the publication of secular school books in Kiswahili. The committee was also meant to coopt other governments of the East African region in standardizing Kiswahili. In 1928, a meeting of Representatives on the standardization of Kiswahili from the East African region was held in Mombasa. The meeting emphasized the adoption of the Zanzibaris dialect rather than the Mombasa one in Literacy and literature in schools. In the same year, the Colonial Secretary who presided over the Meeting of Representatives wrote to the governments of Kenya, Tanganyika, Uganda and Zanzibar to find out their views on the standardization of Kiswahili. He informed those present that there was need for a combined effort in compiling dictionaries and grammars. He also stressed the fact that a committee for trans-

lating books for schools be established. In response to this call, the Inter-territorial Language Committee was formed in 1930. Its main aim was to help standardize Kiswahili. Other aims of the committee were: to encourage and help indigenous writers writing in Kiswahili, to advise and give recommendations to all aspiring to be writers and to demonstrate to them the kind of books that were supposed to be written. The Language committee also endeavoured to make arrangements for translating books into Kiswahili or writing them directly in Kiswahili.

The result of the Inter-territorial Language committee was the publication of Madan's Swahili-English and English-Swahili Dictionaries. Works in translation which measured upto the committee's expectations were recommended in disseminating literacy and where possible in providing models for literary writing. Most translated works were written by Europeans. These included R. Stevenson's Treasure Island, (1928), Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress (1888), Swift's Gulliver's Travels (1932), and Haggard's King Solomon's Mines (1929); among others. This was interlaced with the oriental orientation of Swahili literature as manifested in the translation of One Thousand and One Nights by E.W. Brenn in 1928, summing up

the state of Swahili writing at this times, A.B. Hellier is quoted as saying:

No novel exists in Kiswahili which is the original work of the Native of the country.<sup>28</sup>

Ohly, however, believes that the view projected by Hellier need not have been there; he cites Habari Za Wakilindi by Abdalla Hemed bin Ali Iiajemmi which was published in three volumes between 1895 and 1907, Tippu Tip's autobiography which was published in 1902, S. Sehoza's Mwaka Katika Minyororo (1921), H.M.T. Kayamba's Tulivyoona na Tulivyofanya Uingereza (1932) and J. Mbotela's Uhuru wa Watumwa (1934) as a promising start of indigenous Kiswahili prose writing. He explains the reasons for the decay of indigenous Kiswahili belletristic prose at its inception as follows:

The first originated from the impact and consequence of European teaching that East African Societies will have to go through many changes in order to acquire civilizing proficiency such as creative writing. This knack one had to learn from childhood, therefore English school classics (Kipling Swift) were introduced into educational programmes.<sup>29</sup>

Given this immense colonial influence, the first works of Kiswahili prose fiction seem to have followed the path of translated works. The plots and narrative techniques of the early imaginative prose of Shaaban Robert have much in common with the translated works cited above. In Adili na Nduguze, Kusadikika and Kufikirika, the author uses the journey motif just as the one we find in One Thousand and One Nights to construct his plots. The satirical overtones of Kusadikika and Kufikirika and the outlandish places in which they are set hinges on what we find in Gulliver's Travels.

In 1935, in the spirit of motivating indigenous writers, competitions of essay writing were began under the auspices of the Inter-territorial Language Committee. Shaaban Robert presented an essay describing his life from childhood until his wedding in the following year. This essay won the first prize but was not published. Shaaban Robert resumed writing it ten years later, and together with the first part, composed Maisha Yangu na Baada Ya Miaka Hamsini.

Maisha Yangu is the point of departure of Shaaban Robert's commitment to Kiswahili as a weapon of depicting his cultural heritage and later, his awaken-

ing spirit of national liberation. Throughout his life Shaaban Robert was committed to the development of Kiswahili and education even if, his effort was at times frustrated by the colonial government.<sup>30</sup> Some of his poems are aimed at soliciting readers to be proud of and spread Kiswahili. Pambo La Lugha is written for beauty of expression. The poet's intention is to popularize the language and show the depth and aesthetic merit of its idiom. In "Kiswahili",<sup>31</sup> he argues that the relationship between a Mswahili and Kiswahili is comparable to that that exists between a baby and its mother's breasts. Implied in this comparison is the idea that without being nourished on the mother's milk, the baby's health is jeopardized. In a similar way, Shaaban Robert attests that language is a fundamental by which a person's nationalism is defined.

There is also an underlying motive to teach language use in Shaaban Robert's works. In Almasi za Afrika, he points out spelling mistakes as perpetrated by incompetent users of the language and offers correct forms. This is exemplified in the poem "Kiswahili".<sup>32</sup> Robert's interest in enlarging the vocabulary of his readers in context is depicted in his italicization of words and phrases he suspects to be uncommon. A clear instance of this is manifested in Kusadikika

and Kufikirika. Most collections of Shaaban Robert's poetry contain glossaries. His Kielezo cha Fasili, Kielezo cha Insha and Insha na Mashairi deal with understanding and appreciating the use of language poetically and discursively. In Siku Ya Watenzi Wote, he attests through a character that a dynamic use of language need not shy away from the use of loan-words. Robert thus supports conceptually and in practice the ways in which Kiswahili could accommodate itself to the fast changing technological world. So much was his contribution to Kiswahili through his artistic works that we can discern his changing perspectives on colonialism through them.

The religious environment under which Shaaban Robert is brought up is basically Islamic. This is portrayed in the advice he gives his son in Utenzi wa Adili. Robert demands from the son respect for God, the King and parents as the starting point of his blessedness. Shaaban Robert's pre-occupation with the pursuit of perfection is underlined at the very outset of the autobiography:

I wanted to meet luck in public and not privately. May be, you will ask, "What luck were you looking for?" I wished never to do any shameful act



before people in my whole life. If, before this time I had committed a shameful act about which I am unaware but which is remembered by somebody else, I wished I would not do such an act again in the rest of my life.<sup>34</sup>

The writer's perception of the world is inspired by a strong sense of idealism. That Shaaban Robert craves for an untainted name in the moral sense seems to be motivated by Western Idealism with streaks of Christianity and Islamic thinking. Shaaban Robert was an admirer of Voltaire, a French Renaissance philosopher. Part two of his Koja La Lugha is a translation into Kiswahili of one of Voltaire's poems, "The Lisbon Earthquake". Appraising the work, Shaaban Robert makes a general but revealing comment on Voltaire:

This is one of the greatest French educator's and ranks very high among French authors.<sup>35</sup>

In The Lisbon Earthquake, Voltaire opposes philosophical optimism as propounded by Leibniz and current in his time. What pre-occupies the poet is not

the tragic aspect of the quake but the disapproval of the belief that "all is for the best in the best possible of the worlds".<sup>36</sup> To Voltaire, philosophical optimism is a cruel philosophy under a consoling name. It makes human beings abandon themselves to fatalism instead of being responsible for their own acts. Shaaban Robert's concern with men's responsibility for their actions despite their ultimate accountability to the Supreme Being appears to be motivated by Voltaire's idea.

As we have pointed out earlier, Shaaban Robert was a Muslim. Consequently, he was influenced by the Islamic way of thinking. The Islamic view of a perfect society is revealed in The Koran, which is regarded as a total way of life. An ideal Islamic society is based on five principles: prayer, witness for Islam, religious fasting and pilgrimage to Mecca. While Islam teaches that all human beings are equal, the rich in society are institutionally expected to give alms to the poor and not to rate their riches above God and religion. A Muslim is expected to respect this dialectic and at the same time, strive to better his place in paradise. This attitude is depicted in most works of Shaaban Robert.

In Tenzi Za Marudi Mema, Shaaban Robert testifies to the meaninglessness of material acquisition because in his view, material pursuits encourage one to take care of worldly affairs to the neglect of the more transcendental needs which are to him of greater importance. The only justification, it appears for some people's ownership of property and not others in Islam is for those who have to share with those who do not have. The sharing is not intended to pull the receiver of alms to the same level of ownership as the giver. It is an on-going process which does not completely satisfy the needs of the poor. A world view such as this would avidly embrace the principle of the divine right of Kings and slaves. Shaaban Robert takes the legitimacy of kings for granted in the works in which they appear. At the same time, his most fundamental solutions to the problems of the poor are attributed to God. In Kielezo cha Fasili on "kuondoana Njiani",<sup>37</sup> Robert seems to argue that notwithstanding the exploitation of the poor, God consoles them.

Another element of religious significance which runs through Shaaban Robert's writing is the mutual exclusivity of Good and Bad from a moral standpoint. Shaaban Robert's concern with these moral concepts in the abstract inspires him to write mainly about Utopian

characters in Utopian environments.. His characters and themes especially in his fictional prose works say something about the physical world; but they have overriding metaphysical imports. Shaaban Robert's quest for the good is evident in his writings in their entirety:

Shaaban Robert is deeply concerned for the human predicament of man faced with the forces of evil in his own nature. Evil is, according to the author, a denial of man's humanity; an evil man is unable to recognize moral laws which differentiate men from beasts... Thus the conflict of good and evil is seen ... in moral terms as the struggle of virtue against vice, of humanity against bestiality<sup>38</sup>

In the foregoing pages, we have outlined the African, political, literary and religious circumstances under which Shaaban Robert operates. Robert was proud of his African origins. We are given to understand that his parents loved him and taught him tribal customs and traditions. Robert was educated in the traditional sense by being exposed to the proverbs, similes and narratives of his people. The author's fecundity in the use of proverbs and idioms based on his immediate environment verifies this.

Adili na Nduguze for instance:

lies close to oral literature:  
indeed it is Shaaban Robert's  
interpretation of the folktale  
of the youngest son and  
his evil brothers.<sup>39</sup>

The colonial situation seems to affect Shaaban Robert in two ways: he criticizes the evils perpetrated by colonialism but does not radically do so. Secondly, the colonial set-up provides models on which the author's early fiction is constructed. The literary climate of Shaaban Robert is closely tied up with the colonial situation in which he finds himself. While there is need on the part of colonialist to develop Kiswahili for administration, this need is limited in scope. The African is supposed to write relative to the colonialist aims. That Shaaban Robert transcends these limitations and criticizes some of the colonial policies shows that he is a sensitive recorder of the experiences of his time. The religious background of Shaaban Robert provides the ultimate point of reference of his ideas and beliefs. Whatever kind of contribution that Shaaban Robert makes are fundamentally subordinated to the demands of the Supreme Being. These experiences filter into one another to give us Shaaban Robert's

literary biography and ideas. They will elucidate our understanding of the works under study. In the next chapter, we will examine the use of allegory in Adili na Nduguze , Kusadikika and Kufikirika.

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## Chapter Three

### Shaaban Robert: The Early Works

In the foregoing chapter, we discussed the literary biography of Shaaban Robert. As we showed, the reason for relating it is that we believe that a writer's life is in some ways related to his creative works.

This chapter is pre occupied with Shaaban Robert's use of allegory in three prose works namely, Adili na Nduguze, Kusadikika and Kufikirika. The purpose of placing these works in the same chapter is that they are stylistically inspired by the same spirit; all of them tend to be non-realistic in that they are set in lands strange to our world. Besides, the dominant characters through whom the author reveals his message are fabulous and flat. They are representations of qualities rather than actual phenomenal characters. We want to argue that these characters, and topoi that the writer enunciates through them are portrayed as such due to the allegorical mode that the author employs and subscribes to. In the three works, the author sometimes moralizes and in other cases criticizes human beings. Yet he does not for a moment extricate himself from the allegorical cloaks in which

his storylines are cast. For clarity of discussion, we will begin by reviewing briefly the books under study.

Shaaban Robert attests in the preface of Adili na Nduguze that the bizzarre situations he moulds are merely artistic and what he is really concerned with is the world in which actual people live:

The themes that are emphasized in the book are such matters as: the earth and its plants, mines and their treasures, domesticated animals and their products ; commerce and its profits, families and their customs and brothers and their acts.<sup>1</sup>

This introductory remark is important in that it reveals the writer's awareness of his intentions with regard to the present work. It is not just about simple, romantic fanciful characters far removed from concrete people; the romantic and fantastic cloaks are weapons intended to flesh the essential messages of the book. The writer's emphasis on the main ideas communicated in Adili na Nduguze in the introduction testifies to the wrongness of a superficial treatment of books. Adili na Nduguze, like Kusadikika and Kufiki-rika, is concerned with the virtue of charity, the

criticism of futile jealous and the lashing out of punishment that deforms the physical structure of human beings instead of reforming them morally. It also idolizes Shaaban Robert's faith in monotheistic religion.

Kusadikika and Kufikirika are also regarded in the same breath as Adili na Nduguze. For although the artist argues that they are abstract, the events that take place therein betray concrete characteristics. Kufikirika is a sequel to Kusadikika. The basic concern of Kusadikika is fighting for the establishment of the legal institution. Kufikirika on the other hand begins from the assumption that there is a fair judiciary. Problems, however, evolve and lead to the erosion of this organ. Shaaban Robert's pre-occupation here then becomes the regurgitation of an otherwise corroded institution. In Kusadikika, the ~~duel~~ for the establishment of law is motivated by the many cases of injustice which are meted out to the citizens due to the reactionary principles of the Prime Minister. Karama is brought to court and charged with fomenting disaffection towards The King. Karama's dissenting views are said to be depicted in his assembling of followers around himself whom he teaches law. After the charges are read out, Karama in contraposition to the wishes of the Prime

Minister pleads for self-defence. The King overrules Majivuno's predetermined opinion to have Karama sentenced without trial and asks the latter to defend himself. The defence takes six long days. Each day is devoted to the description of messenger's sojourn to outside lands. The messenger returns with reforming messages. Instead of his voice being listened to, the Prime Minister brands him an impostor and a visionary whose dreams cannot come true. As days slip by, the argument swells to a crescendo, with the entire population of Kusadikika eventually coming to listen to Karama's witness. At the end of the testimony Karama is cogent, everybody is tired of the protracted trial and The King acquits him quickly. He also orders the release of all the imprisoned messengers of Kusadikika. In principle, the King welcomes the reformatory messages of Karama and his like. Robert foregrounds the victory of justice over injustice and the redeeming role of the King in cases in which holders of other administrative offices such as the Prime Minister are unjust, unreasonable and myopic.

Kufikirika depicts a King who does not have an heir and is in desperate throes of having one. As a result, all the magicians of the country are summoned

for help. Six groups of magicians heed the King's call. But for one, none of the groups succeeds in retrieving the King and the Queen out of barrenness. Notwithstanding their defeat, the magicians leave a dessicated land, ridden of all its greenery and wildgame. Consequently, starvation rages on. The sixth group of magicians say that the King would have a child because he and his spouse are within the human biological bracket of bearing. The leader of this group also argues that miracles are possible as proven by holy writings. He alludes to one of the prophets of God who begets a child despite his advanced age. The prognostication that a child would be born is juxtaposed with the condition that there will be need for human sacrifice to save the life of the King's child. At the age of ten, the King's child, who had hitherto been vivacious, is taken ill. A law is conveniently enacted to sanction human sacrifice. A fool and a brilliant person's blood is required according to the prophecy's tenet. The choice of the foolish and the clever persons is based on arbitrary reasons, a farmer is deemed foolish while a shopkeeper clever.

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Through a petition to the King, the 'fool' argues that human sacrifice cannot cure illness. -Only

medicinal drugs can. In the end, the King's son is treated by the application of drugs. It is also discovered that the forecaster of the birth of the King's child, the first teacher of that child and the 'fool' who was to be sacrificed, are the same person. The King realizes that Utubusara Ujingahasara has been a great asset to his house and Kufikirika. He appoints Utubusara Ujingahasara Prime-Minister. Robert, here again attacks conservatism and superstition. He argues that people who are not exposed to modern education and therefore who are foolish have no sense of direction, when faced with problems. The birth of a child, he unravels, results easily from sheer biological expediency. There are also signs in the action of the text that the King's child will seriously fall sick due to his being forced to continuously cram facts without moments of relaxation. Shaaban Robert criticizes systems of education which concentrate on heaping facts in the learner's head to the utter neglect of that learner's health. Besides, he parodies the teaching of outmoded ideas and the practice of human sacrifice. Finally, he appears to argue that intelligence is the key to all problems of the world.

In Adili na Nduguze, Kusadikika and Kufikirika Shaaban Robert is concerned with the problems of man faced with evil and destructive forces embedded in his own nature. Evil is a deterrent of man's quest for his basic humanity. Adili in Adili na Nduguze stands for the virtuous in man. His ability to endure suffering is important in leading to his success and fundamental in demonstrating the victory of virtue over vice:

On the one hand we have  
Adili's individual experience:  
Instead of punishing his brothers,  
he continues acting with patience,  
perseverance and sympathy.  
On the other hand, we have a picture  
of two societies: a world governed  
by justice without mercy  
in the Kingdom of the genie...  
the Utopian vision of Mfalme  
Rai's country posits man's  
potential for good as greater than  
his potential for evil.<sup>2</sup>

In Kusadikika and Kufikirika, the author's burden is to search for a democratic government. The two works are critical of conservatism and totalitarianism. Adili na Nduguze, Kusadikika and Kufikirika give a hopeful and positive image of man. This is depicted in Shaaban Robert's support for a perfect monarchy.



In order for Shaaban Robert to depict these ideas in the context of his entire world-view as portrayed in his early imaginative prose, he uses allegory. Allegory in Adili na Nduguze, Kusadikika and Kufikirika operates at the personification, the narrative, the extended metaphor and the fabulous levels.<sup>3</sup> We will begin by analysing the use of personification allegory in the three works. By the personification level of allegory, we mean the use of proper-nouns in a descriptive way. Most proper-nouns in these texts are used to describe somebody or something qualitatively rather than just work as mere labels that make people or things different from one another. We will discuss the use of the personification of names in Adili na Nduguze, Kusadikika and Kufikirika respectively.

All names in Adili na Nduguze carry semantic content. These meanings are associated with what characters do or what happens at or to certain places. Rai is the King of Ughaibu. 'Ughaibu' implies 'far a way'. From what Robert says in the preface it is not meant to be very far from the reader; it is an indirect allusion to a nearby place, much in the same way as the narrator of a folktale personifies common human virtues and vices in animals and places them in infinite environ-

ments. As we will show later, 'Ughaibu' is close to the reader's own land which has been referred to as such to furnish the internal consistency of the author's fashion of writing. The word Rai, the name of Ughaibu's ruler, has four distinct meanings.

Three are closely related. One of the meanings is:

Speak sweetly to somebody  
for the purpose of wanting that  
person to do what he is asked  
to coax; to beg humbly.<sup>4</sup>

The word also connotes an opinion that one gives on an issue. Thirdly 'rai' implies the condition of being healthy and finally it has got something to do with putting food in the mouth.

The connotations of the first three meanings of 'Rai' explicitly or implicitly describe what the King does. There is an underlying positive element in the associations depicted in the name. Rai's reign, according to Shaaban Robert, is just. His fairness is discerned in his patience and circumspection in finding out the cause of Janibu's failure to remit its share of taxes to the central government. Before Rai sends an envoy to ascertain the reasons for the failure, he gives Janibu all the benefits of doubt.

He is not so much concerned with the failure in terms of Janibu's dissent against his rule as with the environmental hazards that may have precipitated the failure. 'Janibu' means 'neighbourhood'. Of course, the land to which Rai sends a messenger is in the neighbourhood of Ughaibu.

The writer's use of the 'Ughaibu' 'Janibu' relationship is an allegorical expression of the ideal relationship between a metropolitan state and its vassals, between master and servant. While the sanctioning of a metropolis to tax a vassal state alludes to the fact that the author is an apologist for the conquest of one nation by another, this episode paints his graphic image of an ideal and humanistic class society.

Rai's positive attributes are also portrayed after discovering that Adili has some apes which he retributes every night. His discovery is tempered with shock and disbelief. Rai convinces Adili that through determination and strong will-power, the punishment that Wivu and Hasidi have been condemned to will be retracted. Rai suggests opinions which are at first too Herculean to be accomplished by Adili. This is suggested in his name. From Robert's descrip-

tion of Rai, we deduce that he is physically healthy. His health need not be physical alone; it is manifested in his love for virtue and his unyielding desire to uphold humane attributes.

'Adili' in Kiswahili is both nominal and verbal.

As a noun, it has two shades of meaning. One is:

( good, righteous conduct,  
and impartiality in  
dealing with people.<sup>5</sup>

It also refers to:

teachings on being morally  
good, just and responsible;  
depictions or lessons that are  
disseminated say through  
stories or poems for the purpose  
of teaching.<sup>6</sup>

Adili's character radiates overt moral attributes. All the above stated meanings relate to his life in the text. The second meaning of 'adili' refers to moral lessons imparted through stories or poems. This is allegorical in Adili's name for he is not given the name by the author for its own sake, but as an example of a morally good person whom humanity should emulate. As an action, 'adili' implies acting truthfully and

justly. Throughout the action of Adili na Nduguze, Adili strives to live a life of undoubted moral integrity. Although he does not succeed at first in interceding for his brothers, who had been condemned to a horrifying punishment, his name suggests that he will eventually succeed. The story of Adili's relationship with his brothers verifies that morally good attributes are struggled for, sometimes at the cost of suffering physically and psychologically. In the story, whenever Adili does not flog his brothers, a djinn appears suddenly and punishes him severely. Adili's displeasure with punishing his brothers does not become practical until he is motivated by Rai to hold a dialogue with the world of djinns.

Robert clearly points out in this context that fear of pain deters human beings from exhibiting their unlimited moral prowess over the forces of evil. The ability to conquer fear, he seems to be saying, enables human beings to project their transcendental qualities, including the ability to forgive the apparently unforgivable. Rai's mitigation for Wivu and Hasidi emphasizes the reforming role of punishment rather than its use to distort the original physical form of a human being. Through Rai's intercession for Adili's wayward brothers, Robert uncompromisingly disagrees with the transmutation of the soul as punishment. The

writer uses allegorical names to bring out this argument cogently. His criticism of punishments that deform rather than reform man is based on his belief in the virtue of forgiveness

Adili's brothers act in an evil way. Their very names are ~~are~~ suggestive of evil. A 'hasidi' is a person who feels jealous of others' achievements. 'Wivu' is a feeling of jealousy emanating from hatred of a flourishing love relationship between a man and a woman; or even people of the same sex. Their names are interchangeable, for they virtually think and act similarly. The names 'Hasidi' and 'Wivu' are symbolic of what these characters do. They want everything good for themselves and nothing for Adili. For instance, they throw Adili into the sea for want of his love. The self-destructiveness of jealousy is shown in the fact that a fight ensues between Wivu and Hasidi because each one of them wants the girl that was originally destined for Adili. The nearness in meaning of 'Wivu' and 'Hasidi' makes the characters who bear these names allegorical representations, albeit transient, of the destructive forces of evil.

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That Shaaban Robert does not condone idolatry is demonstrated in the transformation of a city into stone because its inhabitants worship Mammon. The significance of the transformation is portrayed in the name of 'Mji wa Mawe', which literally means "The City of Stones". Underlying this label is the adamant refusal of this city's inhabitants to listen to the prophet who is invested with divine messages. Continual refusal of what Shaaban Robert believes is the way to eternal life is analogous to assuming the nature of stones. In everyday life, no matter how much stones are talked to, they remain dumb and mute. Thus by their dumbness and deafness, they validate their inactive existence. When the citizens of 'Mji wa Mawe' change into stones, they confirm their nature, not just after becoming stones, but also even while they were still alive, for they were not ready to listen to God's messenger. The messenger's very name 'Mrefu', which means a 'tall person' suggests the fundamentalism of the message he carries and imparts. His height signifies the divine scope of his message, the message that surpasses what any ordinary mortal can disseminate to fellow human beings. From the above, Robert's image of a perfect person is Utopian in that the perfect person is far beyond the run of common people that live in this world. The episodes of Mji wa Mawe is Robert's allegorical expression of his displeasure with material pursuits that are devoid

of religious overtones. In this instance, the writer underlines his deep belief in monotheistic religion and judgement of idolaters. The allegorical name is used effectively in this case to depict the enormity of Nemesis that stands in the way of Mammon-worshippers.

Some names of characters are used negatively to corroborate the author's views about them. The Queen of the djinns is called 'Mjeledi'. 'Mjeledi' is literally a whip, especially that which is made from leather. This name tells us that djinns pass decisions by mainly inflicting pain. 'Mjeledi', being a whip made from leather, does not break easily. This shows the difficulty of the djinns to change their minds once they are set on a certain idea. The djinns' callousness is shown in the text in the sub-human conditions they subject Hasidi and Wivu to, and their unwillingness to lessen their punishment until Rai intervenes. The daughter of djinns has power to change herself into various forms of existence. She has independence to act without being accountable for her actions. Her decision to help Adili out of any trouble is made independent of any external motivations. Her name is 'Huria', a derivation from 'huru' which means 'free'. Huria is free to do many things without consulting her parents.



In Kusadikika, names of persons and places bear meanings just as in Adili na Nduguze. Kusadikika is the country in which bringers of positive messages are subjected to unjust imprisonment. The actions that take place in this country are projected in the name given to it. 'Kusadikika' is a causative abstract verb which means "that which is believable". It is derived from 'Sadiki', which has the connotation that something is true or realistic. A causative is an act which occurs without cause or just cause. The very title of book, Kusadikika, gives the first glimmerings of what happens in the country, Kusadikika. Many actions take place in the country without just cause. The underlying implications of 'kusadikika' tally with another causative, 'kufikirika', which gives the notion of that which can be thought about without any justifiable precedent. The central events in Kufikirika are done without rational premeditations. In both Kusadikika and Kufikirika, some sections of the administrative machinery act to satisfy their egotistical whims to the neglect of the welfare of their countries. Using these abstracts causatives as titles for books enables Shaaban Robert to prepare us for what we meet in the action of texts. This, then, becomes, the point of departure for the extensive use of names allegorically.

The Prime Minister of kusadikika is called Majivuno. 'Majivuno' is a negative quality in human beings. The character whose name carries this semantic content carries himself around arrogantly. He uses his position to intimidate or destroy individuals who are gifted to bring changes in kusadikika's governmental policies. For Shaaban Roberts, a discrepancy between intrinsic human behaviour and external appearances has satirical overtones. The statements from which the name 'Majivuno' is deduced in the context of the text are fallacious and absurd. There is no illusion about Shaaban Robert's intentions when he states:

The Prime Minister of Kusadikika was a man of immense physical attractiveness and cleverness. For this reason, he was called Majivuno.<sup>7</sup>

As we will show presently, the translation of the foregoing excerpt renders it artistically ineffective. The relationship between the Prime Minister's name and descriptive statements that inform it does not make logical sense unless it is envisioned within the total world-perception of Shaaban Robert. 'Haiba' is a characteristic that makes one physically attractive. It may also mean good behaviour, and lastly, it refers to any form of beauty. The overt emphasis on

the physical appearance of the Prime Minister in the context of his evil designs, however, obviously betrays some misgivings on the part of the author. Indeed, a part from 'Uhodari' conveying the sense of one being able to carry out a task effectively, it has also the meaning of 'Usogora', that is to say, the habit of putting oneself in the role of being an expert, when the contrary is in fact the case. A person who is described as 'hodari' can be treacherous as well. These later connotations are sarcastic. They eliminate all possible positive traits we may have supposed to exist in Majivuno's character.

Kusadikika unfolds Majivuno's use of his natural gift of eloquence to bring down all well-meaning reformers of the nation. The ambiguity which seems to be exhibited in the character of the Prime Minister at the outset is completely stripped off when he is described as being full of 'tadi' and 'Inda'. 'Mwenye tadi' is an evil person. Evil because he is intelligent and uses that intelligence to destroy exponents of new ideas ostensibly because they are impostors, but really because he believes they are potential usurpers of his power. Majivuno's evil motives are depicted in his refusal to allow under-

dogs to defend themselves. "Inda' implies deliberate prevention of one from achieving one's life's pursuits. Majivuno exhibits this behaviour in two ways: he imprisons Kusadikika's 'prophets of hope' without fair trial and retards Kusadikika's progress by denying her an opportunity to keep abreast with her neighbours' developmental pace. These words 'mwenye tadi na Inda' summarize Majivuno's character; he is evil and malicious. His name describes his character and role consummately.

At the beginning of the accusation levelled against Karama, Majivuno addresses the anonymous King to whom "the case is presented as 'Jalali'. 'Jalali'<sup>8</sup> is one of the descriptive titles of God in Islam. It means 'God of the Most High', alluding to God's attribute of pre-eminence. Since there is no sarcastic antecedent attached to the name and Shaaban Robert being a Muslim<sup>9</sup>, he cannot call the King by the title which belongs to God. The word 'Jalali' has, however, another meaning: 'Your Excellency'<sup>10</sup>. The second meaning of 'Jalali' implies simply a title for respect. The King's patience during the trial and his redemption of an otherwise already condemned person cannot be doubted. His wise final say in the case makes him commensurate with the description: "Your

Excellency".

Karama is the protagonist of the contending forces in the debate that goes on in the book. Besides, he is Robert's mouth-piece. Karama's name means just more than a label: in the Islamic religious diction, "Karama" is a charisma that is bestowed upon a person as a result of his being deeply committed to the service of God. Implied in this is also the ability of one's prayer to be answered. Karama's other-worldly charismatic gifts are expressed physically as follows:

He was wise, courageous and eloquent.<sup>11</sup>

Robert does not directly say whether these gifts are learned or innate. From the meaning of the character's name, we infer that the gifts are inborn, given to him by God.

Other actions in Kusadikika reveal broader meaningful ramifications of the name Karama. The messengers, preceding Karama, who have been indicted and jailed by Majivuno seem not to have appealed for defence to the King at the time of their trial. If they do so, their defence is nullified—that is why they end up in prison. Karama is the only one given a chance to defend himself. The time he is given is so long that it could only have been motivated by supernatural intervention. That what Karama asks for is automatically granted reveals that his name and character embody the proceedings of the case in his favour. In the long run, the cause for which Karama sacrifices his life succeeds. He is acquitted as well as his fore-runners. His acquittal follows from his logicity of argument and his ability to pull crowds without being arrogant. This catalogue of successes on the part of Karama is embodied in his name.

Karama's humility is in contraposition with Majivuno's arrogant self-assertiveness. Majivuno's statements are strongly coloured by a sense of absolutism and finality. He sees the case against Karama as predeterminedly finished, with Karama as the culprit. By doing this, he reduces the legal process to his own, supreme, clear-sighted comprehension of the situation and facts. Majivuno justifies what he states by alluding to the greyness of his hair and his patrician upbringing. A good citizen, according to him, does not question the status-quo; a good citizen is supposed to be perpetually cowed by people in power. Majivuno is an ardent promoter of totalitarianism. He is self-conceited and myopic. By the use of the names Karama and Majivuno, Shaaban Robert emphasizes the ironic contrast of the roles played by these character respectively.

Kusadikika's messengers also bear allegorical names. Like Karama, their names carry overriding positive associations. The messenger's names and their approximate corresponding meaning in English are explained as follows: 'Buruhani' is the 'power of God' or the 'Charisma bestowed upon by God', 'Fadhili' implies either 'to give help when it is needed or 'to practice charity'. 'Kabuli' is the act of 'acceptance'. In the context of Kusadikika it is related to God's acceptance of ones prayer. 'Auni' means an 'aid' or that which is 'dependent upon'. The messenger who bears this name is dependent on God and he is also

depended on by Wasadikika because he accepts to go out on a mission of exploration even when the situation is hopeless; for all the messengers who precede him have been jailed. 'Ridhaa' connotes 'satisfaction', Ridhaa is completely satisfied by the way the celestial government is run. 'Amini' means 'believe' or 'accept'. The character whose name is denoted by this word believes in God and is optimistic that if his message is accepted, the life of Wasadikika will be greatly improved.

Like the positive messengers of Kusadikika, the conservative masters' names are allegorical; but unlike them, they depicted a crust of reaction and corruption. Taadabuni is Secretary to the cabinet. His name implies 'teaching somebody manners in a derogatory sense'. 'Komeni's name is derived from 'Koma', which literally means 'cease' or 'stop'. Being the commander of Kusadikika's army, his name says what he does - he renders those who are opposed to their system of administration cease. Both Taadabuni and Komeni symbolize forces which intimidate people from expressing their fundamental freedom. "Fujo" means 'mess'. The word has strong affiliations with spending resources in a disorderly way. That Fujo,

the character, is the treasurer of Kusadikika implies that economy is mismanaged. Boramimi is the self-seeker 'par excellence'. He is an egotist whose name reveals this characteristic. . His way of defining concepts fits in with his eccentricism.

Boramimi defines law as the art of opposing the law.<sup>12</sup> This is irrational and absurd. Yet Boramimi's definition of law reveals the operation of the legal institution in Kusadikika. The fact that prisoners are not given chance to defend themselves, that judgement is passed without fair trial shows that Boramimi's definition is in harmony with the way justice is purported to be perpetrated in Kusadikika. His definition is, therefore, in agreement with what he understands to be the laws of the land. The laws are not intended to protect the rights of common people; they are meant to violate them. It is against this background that Karama is intent upon introducing a humane legal establishment.

The use of positive and negative names to depict the messengers and conservative masters of Kusadikika is representative of the war between virtue and vice respectively. . By representing these ideas in characters, Robert is being allegorical. The use of names



of characters which carry mutually exclusive connotations makes the conflict between virtue and vice more pointed.

Kufikirika has few proper-nouns and place-names that carry meanings; the whole storyline, however, hinges in Utubusaraujingahasara. Utubusaraujingahasara is foremost among the magicians who solve the King's barrenness. He is also the teacher to the King's son and one of those who are supposed to be sacrificed in order that the illness of the King's son may be cured. He solves the King's barrenness by the use of biological knowledge, teaches the King's son perfectly and repudiates human sacrifice through arguing convincingly that it is not human blood but drugs that cure sickness. In all these cases, Utubusaraujingahasara's name is emblematic of the fact that it is better to be intelligent and clever than to be stupid. His intelligence enables him to overcome every hurdle that comes his way. Eventually, he is made Prime Minister.

In one stance, however, a frivolous use of an allegorical name occurs in Kufikirika. We are given to understand that the medicine which cures the King's son is got from 'Bahari ya Kufaulu', which means 'The Sea of Success'.

Given that the character who prescribes the cure reasons scientifically, 'Bahari ya Kufaulu' is not given an adequate semantic context to elucidate its significance. The use of 'Bahari ya Kufaulu' reveals how Shaaban Robert is irresistibly drawn towards using allegorical names. It appears that the writer's use of allegorical names is not only stylistic but natural.

Names of characters in Adili na Nduguze, Kusadikika and Kufikirika determine the underlying meaning of an encounter or a role. The names cited in the foregoing passages are personifications of the author's overriding concern with virtues and vices. This transparent association of names and moral qualities is allegorical. In Kusadikika in particular, there is no firmly established hierarchy of value to give meaning to the development of the main characters<sup>13</sup>. Karama and his predecessors are similar in having names that signify identical attributes. Yet there is no specific reason why Karama should be given the onus of explaining the tribulations of other messengers. In view of this, what seems really to matter is not the specific character's name and its significance but the overall impression of the name in the entire action of the story.

To the extent that Majivuno's and his entourage's names have negative meanings they represent retrogressive forces; on the other hand, Karama and other messenger's stand for progress because their very names signify this in the author's scheme of thinking. That Karama is made the last messenger and discursively represent the messages of reformers before him culminating in his own gives a progressive sense to the elements that the messengers symbolize.

Kusadikika's prophets do not visit lands that teach them the good and the virtuous alone. Some of them visit lands that have lost a sense of direction morally, thereby confirming what Robert best admires in terms of what he hates. A case in point is Kabuli, who visits the land of Juju. 'Juju' is also a Kiswahili word for 'djinnns'. Djinnns in Kusadikika are portrayed as voracious, egoistic and with no sense of morality. Kabuli learns about their greed, which is essentially similar to kusadikika's. His report is critical of the djinnns, and therefore, is also an onslaught on kusadikika's greed.

If Shaaban Robert's protagonists are governed by a high sense of duty, their encounters are also multifarious. Their ability to persevere suffering

as they make journeys and their faithful and graphic documentation of what they see in other lands is to Shaaban Robert heroic. The messengers' heroism is particularly foregrounded in the wisdom they depict in distinguishing virtue from vice and their unwavering support for the former.

Buruhani visits the Northern countries. He sees large cities, tarmac roads and wonderful bridges. The government in the North is founded on socialist principles. He returns with a strong zeal to report what he has seen. He is not allowed. Fadhili explores the Eastern countries. Eastern countries, he ascertains, are making attempts to establish perfect governments; governments that will nurture societies without war. Fadhili argues in his report that a battlefield is no arena for heroism; it creates and aggravates grudges instead of conciliating inimical groups of people. Auni finds out that in 'Giza', which means 'darkness', people have become so disillusioned by the moral depravity of their surroundings that they have physically blinded themselves. They do not want to see the dirt, corruption and ugliness that surrounds them. Shaaban Robert's pessimism is shown here. Instead of fighting against situations that lead to the disorderly processes of life, he becomes apathetic. That this is

one of the opinions that are open to Shaaban Robert in reacting to the ugly parts of life is demonstrated in his support for Salihi's views. Salihi is the character who chooses physical blindness because he hates everything that surrounds him. In 'Iktisadi', which means 'good economic planning, Auni relaxes. He is swept down to Iktisadi by the 'Maangamizi', the destructive river. The destructive effects of this river is a pointer to the destruction that pervaded Iktisadi before the era of good economic planning dawned. Auni's message to the citizens of kusadikika is to harness their natural resources and use them to plan their economies.

Shaaban Robert romantically admires the celestial government. Ridhaa, the messenger who goes to heaven is satisfied with the heavenly administration. According to Ridhaa, the heavenly government is supreme and all other governments are judged by it. Robert is, in this instance, asking Wasadikika to act consciously, knowing that they are accountable for their actions to the celestial powers. The last messenger of Kusadikika goes to the earth. 'Earthians' have invented ships, developed agricultural and medical sciences. Communal participation in the deliberation of human actions is practised. There is, to Shaaban

Robert's thinking as shown in the message of this messenger, Justice on earth. Contrary to this, Amini notes that Wasadikika massacre one another everyday. It is against this background that Kamara's juxtaposition of life as perceived by his predecessors and the present state of affairs as it operates in Kusadikika that he proposes the establishment of the law not as 'the art of opposing law' but:

The science of passing judgement  
on the basis of the laws  
that have been passed  
and agreed on. 14

Kusadikika's messengers are significant as they help in developing Karama's debate. As individuals, they occupy the same status.

The same case applies to the central character of Kufikirika. Utubusaraujingahasara's choice of the elements that come first in his criticism of conservatism seems to be based on arbitrary grounds. What matters is the overall result of his effort: the fact that good triumphs over evil. In Adili na Nduguze, however, the hierarchy of value that gives meaning to the development of the main characters exists. Though Adili is a morally upright person, he lacks the essential moral courage to hold dialogue with the djinns. He is obedient to the

djinn, contrary to the dictates of his conscience. Rai's intervention makes Adili better armed in defending virtue, for he is capable of nurturing the notion that his brothers' pristine physical form will be regained. The hierarchy of value in Adili na Nduguze is not only seen in the transformation of Wivu and Hasidi from evil to virtuous people, it is also seen in Adili's revision of his ultimate moral stand, which is initially flawed. As we will show presently, the significance of allegorical names in developing themes in Adili na Nduguze, Kusadikika and Kufikirika is provided for by the narrative structure in which they are cast.

The second level of the use of allegory in Shaaban Robert's Adili na Nduguze, Kusadikika and Kufikirika are disguised representation for meanings other than those indicated on the surfaces. Names alone in these works, even if they bear semantic matter, would not effectively bring out Robert's message if it were not for the narrative structure in which they occur. This is because the characters being flat, they would simply be static and this would render the discursive characteristic of the books untenable. The narrative level of Shaaban Robert's use of allegory refers to the ways in which various elements combine in the stories

to sustain their internal logic both at the literal level and the literary level. The form of Adili na Nduguze, Kusadikika and Kufikirika is based on the motifs of progress. Adili na Nduguze and Kusadikika use the journey and debate as ways of providing organic structures to the tales they tell. Kufikirika is a kind of quest.

In Adili na Nduguze and Kusadikika, the protagonists make long journeys that provide them with chances of gathering stocks of experiences that teach them some lessons or that enable them to espouse new ideas. The journeys and the encounters of these characters are literal in the sense that they are not in themselves the main concerns that Robert is intent upon teaching us. In fact, these journeys need not be physical at the literary level; they may be intellectual introspective moments in the characters' lives which enable them to criticize jealousy, idolatry and avarice as in the case of Adili na Nduguze, or which reinforce characters to posit reformatory messages as in Kusadikika and Kufikirika. The literary significance of these works lies in our extrapolation and connection of moral abstractions in terms of general statements from the stories as they are literally told. The clue to the conjunction of the literal and the literary in the three texts is



provided by Robert when he stops at certain key points in the course of the tales to sermonize the reader.

Adili na Nduguze is a story of brothers whose evil acts lead to their own severe punishment. The King's intercession for them and the brothers' subsequent attainment of their original human form is for Shaaban Robert the crowning glory of the virtue of forgiveness. The allegorical element in this story is that the processes through which this quality is attained are supposed to be understood progressively through abstract moral terms, although they have been localized in a specific story. Robert's basic intention is not to tell a particular story about Adili and his brothers; the story as it appears is meant to be interpreted at the level of human attributes.

Adili na Nduguze's literary storyline could read as: a morally upright person succeeds in whatever he does in spite of the obstacles that may stand in his way. Obstacles are necessarily present as the morally good person is continually encountering and being tested by evil; but they are basically transitory. Wrong-doers are punishable, although some punishments are too severe to be just. Unless one commits the unforgivable sin of idolatry, forgiveness is a plausible metaphysical

human quality because it leads to the repentance and therefore, salvation of the forgiven person.

It is on such generalities that the particular story in Adili na Nduguze is predicated. The story as it appears in its specifics is literal while the connection of its various general tendencies reveals its literary meaning. The progressive element in Adili na Nduguze which is provided by the narrative structure is shown in the connected experiences undergone by the characters, which result in learning on their part.

Karama's testimony in Kusadikika takes us to long and mysterious journeys of exploration. These journeys rendered discursively and the ideas that emanate from them are meant to give coherence to Karama's argument that the legal profession be institutionalized in Kusadikika. Karama's allies are shown in a patterned sequence, sacrificing their lives for fundamentally the same cause. They represent the fact that good will always fight against evil until the former prevails over the latter. The writer's repetition in terms of portraying many messengers who go to different lands and return with innovative ideas enable us to assemble an increasing body of abstractions which lend overall meaning to the story. By the end of Kusadikika, the validity of

Shaaban Robert's ideal - his support for reform and his opposition to reaction is firmly underlined. The advantage of the literal narrative not just in Kusadikika alone, but also in Adili na Nduguze and Kufikirika, is that it enables movement on the part of characters both physically and intellectually. As a result, a discernible development of what the writer values is established. If allegorical names did not exist within a literal and progressive narrative structure, they would simply stand for static qualities - without any development or refinement of the metaphysical human qualities they symbolize.

Utubusaraujingahasara of Kufikirika succeeds in what he does through the writer's use of the narrative structure. The quest for humane values in Kufikirika does not have as an articulate pronouncement as either in Adili na Nduguze or Kusadikika. In Kufikirika people learn what is good through experience. The protagonist, for example, knows the baselessness of human sacrifice. But he prescribes it because he pretends to subscribe to the mentality of his age. Belief in superstition is gradually rendered sterile through the disasters that bedevil Kufikirika. These problems and the corresponding hidden discoveries that Utubusara makes lead to the eventual realization

that human sacrifice is uncalled for and conservatism is destructive. The literary story of Kufikirika hinges on the plausibility of scientific education and dismissal of superstitious beliefs.

The narrative structure of Adili na Nduguze, Kusadikika and Kufikirika leads to the consummation of anagnorisis<sup>15</sup> on the part of characters and situations. In the debate in which Karama attests to the necessity of introducing law in Kusadikika, the King eventually recognizes the logicality of Karama's case and acquits him. The process of anagnorisis is depicted in the daily increase of the number of Wasadikika in the courtroom until in the end, all of them come to know and listen to Karama. In Adili na Nduguze, Adili understands that the result of enduring is a capability to face hardships that hitherto could not be faced. Hasidi and Wivu recognize the futility of their evil acts. The King in Kufikirika recognizes Utubusara's wisdom. Like in House of Fame, The Pilgrim's Progress and The Faerie Queene, recognition in Robert's three works lead to transformation of the protagonists. As a result of learning through experiences, characters who conform to the author's world-view confirm his beliefs. Those characters who may have negated the writer's stand earlier on discover ideals worthy pursuing. Recognition and transformation on the part of Robert's main characters has a didactic purpose.

The narrative elements in Adili na Nduguze, Kusadikika na Kufikirika are beefed up by the pictorial 'totality of objects'<sup>16</sup> that Shaaban Robert creates in order to bring out his message effectively. The 'totality of objects' aids to construct the world in which the allegorical mode of Robert seems to be most suited. Visual images are an important vehicle for the meaning of the protagonist's experiences. Adili's crew in Adili na Nduguze is warned against idolatry through the example of a city which is transformed into stone. This use of landscape, together with the individual visual detail, say the height of Mrefu, reveals the literal significance of Mji wa Mawe and also connects it to the overall deep meaning of the story. The total significance of the story in view of these details is of course, Robert's diehard religious predeterminism. In Kusadikika, the river Maangamizi provides a 'sympathetic weather' for the description of the poor planning of Kusadikika's economic system. This shows how an image is used to reveal the significance of an object to the message communicated in the story in its entirety. In short, What we have seen as the narrative level of allegory embodies:

a figurative discourse in which the writer or speaker conveys to the mind a parallel idea by its resemblance in its properties and circumstances to the subject of his ostensible discourse. 17

In the case of Adili na Ndunguze, Kusadikika and Kufikirika the figurative discourses give form and coherence to Robert's ideas.

The next allegorical element that Shaaban Robert uses is extended metaphor. This is shown in two instances in Kusadikika, but one is enough for illustration. We regard an extended metaphor as allegory when it is cast in narrative form. We will call Robert's use of extended metaphor allegory-within-allegory because the extended metaphor is used to illustrate the larger allegorical truths contained in the entire work.

In Kiswahili, 'Lila' and 'Fila' are proverbial archetypes of incompatibles. 'Lila' means what is 'good' and 'Fila' what is 'bad'. The proverb 'Lila and Fila havitangamani' implies a mutual exclusivity of the positive and the negative. Shaaban Robert personifies Lila and Fila and compares them to the contending forces in the unfolding debate as

represented by Majivuno on the one hand and Karama on the other we quote this to illustrate how it works:

Good and bad are mutually exclusive. When Good speaks, Bad pretends not to hear. When Good looks and seeks Bad pretends neither to look nor see. When Good's heart becomes pliable with love and sympathy, that one of Bad is hardened like a stone with hatred and enmity .<sup>18</sup>

Shaaban Robert proceeds to describe how Fila has been in power for a long time and Lila has been all along with his people the victim of Fila's dictatorial administration. This illustration by the use of extended metaphor depicts the Manicheanism of Shaaban Robert's world. It also reveals that Robert's characters have no individual personalities but are embodiments of moral qualities and other abstractions.

The 'Lila and 'Fila' proverb which has been transmuted into an extended metaphor serves another function: it is rendered as Karama's exegetical

statement on what happens in Kusadikika and his feelings about it. The statement is charged with conviction as to its rightness.

In general, commentary upon the story which comes from a protagonist as he tells his story is not confined to the foregoing extended metaphor; it is a common feature in Shaaban Robert's writings. The central events of Adili na Nduguze, Kusadikika and Kufikirika are distanced from the world as we know it. This makes responses of individual characters who are external to the worlds they describe have motives for analysis. Authorial comments aid in allegorical interpretation as they reveal clues that relate the literal to the literary. These comments sometimes appear in the prefaces of works. In most cases, the writer's value judgements are manifested in the action of the stories. At the beginning of Karama's defence in Kusadikika, Robert uses him as a mouthpiece to state:

In practice, life conceals  
its remarkable people until  
big events occur and  
reveal them.<sup>19</sup>



The preface of Adili na Nduquze points out the author's aims unambiguously; he is concerned with actual hopes, fears and frustrations of human beings. For Shaaban Robert to prepare us for the mysterious act which are purported to have happened in the reign of King Rai, he comments:

Kings encounter difficult situations in their lives. There are Kings who start their reigns weak and despised only to rise to the summit of respect and excellency; there are those who have sunk into forgetfulness..... But there are few Kings like Rai, who can claim to have had a chance to settle disputes between human beings and djinns.<sup>20</sup>

Shaaban Robert extends his comments to their logical non-realistic conclusion so that the internal consistency of his story is not stifled. On the one hand, we are supposed to accept the strange world into which Shaaban Robert takes us. On the other, we are not meant to be 'swallowed up' by these outlandish countries and experiences to the utter forgetfulness of the literary attributes of the story. Much of what the King enunciates in Kufikirika is authorial commentary. This helps us to come down to the realistic

world rather than remain in the world of imaginations and fantasies.

The last allegorical element that this thesis wishes to study in Adili na Nduguze, Kusadikika and Kufikirika is the overt use of fabulous situations and characters. The three works exhibit an infinitude of time and space. Ughaibu, Kusadikika, Kufikirika; in fact all the names of characters and places in which the books are set are non-realistic. Only part of the message that is imparted through them is realistic. The use of fabulous situations reinforces the world in which other allegorical elements already examined operate. It consummates the fact that Robert's characters are representations of ideas and therefore, are rather simple and flat. This seems to be the sentiment that is echoed A.N. Shija when he argues in Uchambuzi wa Maandishi Ya Kiswahili that Robert uses personification allegory simplistically.<sup>21</sup> By this, Shija attests that such character portrayal detracts from rather than add to the effectiveness of understanding Robert's prose. It appears, however, that flat and simplistic characterisation is a characteristic feature of the author's allegorical mode and not a portrayal of his

ineptness in delineating vivid character. Flat and simple characters are deliberately created and adapted to the writer's specific purpose, which is to personify abstract ideas for the purpose of bringing home moral truths to their auditors in a more facile manner.

Shaaban Robert's protagonists are capable of accomplishing very difficult and an unimaginable tasks. The operation of the 'Deus ex machina and the 'Daibolus ex Machina' is normal. When Adili in Adili na Nduguze is thrown into the sea, it is a djinn which rescues him in appreciation of Adili's earlier act of charity. This miraculous act is possible in the Shaaban Robert cosmology for the sake of facilitating the essential message he intends to impart. Explaining the historical evolution of characterisation in Kiswahili prose, Madumulla argues with respect to the earliest heroic characters we come across:

That character had super human attributes.  
He exhibited boundless energy and bravery.  
He was easily identified by his limitless  
energy, high sense morality and super-brains.  
This character was set in fantastic  
situations, had Herculean strength, faced  
great hardships but never gave up the fight  
for his declared cause.<sup>22</sup>

The description that is attributed to characters in the above excerpt

is akin to the kind of characters found fables. Adili, Karama and Utubasaraujingahasara are models for imitation. Those characters who exhibit vice like the Prime Ministers in Kusadikika and Kufikirika are consistently evil. There are those that are transformed from evil to good people as in the case of Wivu and Hasidi in Adili na Nduguze. In all cases, however, all the characters in the three works are devoid of any multi-facetedness.

Miraculous actions happen in Shaabaan Robert's fictional world as if they are part and parcel of it. The existence of djinns and their ability to transform themselves to many and varied physical forms is normal. Amini, one of the messengers of Kusadikika, goes to the earth by the help of a bird called Mangerera. The process by which the bird provides means of transport is fantastic:

Amini went down to the earth by tricking Mangerera, one of the very big birds which go to the earth for feeding but habitate in Kusadikika. At the time of his departure, Amini tied himself on the thigh of Mangerera which was then fast asleep. In the morning

the bird woke up and with  
Amini on the thigh, flew  
down to the earth.<sup>23</sup>

Such means of transport is not possible in the realistic world. Yet it is an instance of Robert's preponderant use of the fabulous elements in his work. These fantastic actions, being incredible, deflect our attention from particular actions to general lessons. Fabulous elements, then become, mere dramatisations by which the author occasions pretexts for sermonizing. Actions that take place in Kufikirika are also to be viewed in the same breath. It is practically and realistically impossible to think of a situation in which there are so many magicians that they cut down all the trees of the land to make herbal medicine. But it is possible to have a citizenry which is so devoid of intelligence and foresight that it squanders all its natural resources to the satisfaction of its flimsy superstitious beliefs.

Shaaban Robert's use of the personification of names, the narrative structure in which they occur and the fabulous elements is influenced by the world which surrounds him! Robert's African background as we have already pointed out and his awareness of the oriental folk tradition seems

to underlie the plot and the narrative technique of Adili na Nduguze. The motif of the two older jealousy brothers and the younger virtuous one, which Robert works on in Adili na Nduguze is the same as the motif we find in 'Kisa cha Mzee wa pili na Mbwa Wawili weusi',<sup>24</sup> a story found in the collection of Alfu-Lela Ulela: Kitabu cha Kwanza. Apart from the fact that the East African coast has a long tradition of contact with oriental tales, the Alfu-Lela - Ulela series was published for the first time in 1928, more than ten years before Shaaban Robert published his Adili na Nduguze. It is apparent that Robert reads the stories contained therein and adapts them to his purpose. In 'Kisa cha Mzee', the brothers are changed into dogs and not apes as is the case with Adili na Nduguze. Besides, in 'Kisa cha Mzee' the djinn appears to be a relatively redeeming and merciful force in nature; for the brothers' retribution is supposed to last for ten years only. What is lacking in 'Kisa cha Mzee' is the religious overtone which we find in Adili na Nduguze.

The colonial system which Robert criticizes in Kusadikika and Kufikirika compels him to use allegory, an already existing mode, for satirical purposes. Jonathan Swift's abridged version of Gulliver's Travels

was translated before Shaaban Robert began writing his fictional prose. For Shaaban Robert as well as for Swift, allegory seems to be the ideal indirect method of pressing for reform.

As we have already pointed out, Shaaban Robert's educational background is heterogenous;<sup>25</sup> but his world-view is shaped basically by his Islamic upbringing. We know this from the names he ascribes to his characters and the setting he puts them in. In Kusadikika, 'Salihi' and 'Sapi', whose names connote moral rectitude and covetousness respectively sign a pact that they would share everything they get. They sign their agreement before a 'kadhi', who is a magistrate in the Muslim world. Robert's description of the celestial government in Kusadikika, which he so much admires, is inspired by his belief in Islam. The entire concept of a government 'par excellence', which according to Shaaban Roabert should be emulated by Wasadikika is the heavenly one in the Islamic sense.

An important fact regarding the Islamic concept of God is that He is described in terms of His attributes.<sup>26</sup> God's qualities refer to His omnipotence, Omniscience, Omnipresence, transcendence and immanence. That the author uses names allegorically draws inspiration from a system of naming that reveals attributes of

the characters named. Much as Robert ascribes meaningful names to characters who live up to his ideal, he gives negative characters names that carry negative meanings. The names of conservatives in Kusadikika is based on the revolting description of Satan:

Those heavenly organizational boards were strictly watched over so that they could not be spied upon by anybody except the angels. But our messenger heard that in spite of the strict watchfulness, those organizational bodies were secretly spied on by the devils who then came down to Kusadikika and other countries full of malice. The devils spread malice and lies to show their strength on people who believed in them and proved to them that they had power and knowledge over everything.<sup>27</sup>

Ridhaa is asserting that reactionaries' actions are reinforced by Satan. He and his colleagues are, on the other hand, representatives of what is approved of in heaven. Majivuno, Boramimi, Fujo and Taadabuni are concrete depictions of satanic qualities. Karama, Buruhani, Fadhili, Kabuli, Auni, Ridhaa and Amini are physical portraits of saintly qualities. Utubusara in Kufikirika, is a manifestation of what Shaaban Robert



believes in, which is fundamentally godly. To validate his claim that an heir will be born to the King, Utubusara refers to the Koran in which a man of God gets a child even though he is very old.

The fabulous characteristic of Shaaban Robert's works came from various sources. One of these sources is his African background. An African environment, such as the one in which Shaaban Robert grows up, is conducive for learning modes of presentation which include the use of personifications, proverbs, similes and narratives.<sup>28</sup>

The outlandish plots and settings of Shaaban Robert's Adili na Nduguze, Kusadikika and Kufikirika are so similar to stories in Alfu - Lela Ulela that their contact is undisputable. Some non-realistic characteristics such as the voyages, that Shaaban Robert's characters make, show close links with the Persian cosmos as depicted in Alfu-Lela-Ulela. In Alfu-Lela-Ulela: Kitabu cha Pili,<sup>29</sup> Sindbad the sailor is transported by a bird just in the same way as Ridhaa in Kusadikika is transported to the Earth and back to, Kusadikika by the help a bird. The King of Kufikirika who does not have an heir is similar to King Shahzman of Alfu-Lela-Ulela: Kitabu

cha Tatu who gets an heir after long prayers. Both the worlds depicted in Shaaban Robert's works and Alfu-Lela-Ulela are peopled with djinns whose basic voracity and irascibility are similar.

In this chapter, we have identified and analyzed three basically inextricable features of Shaaban Robert's allegorical mode as exemplified in the earlier works. These features are: the personification of names, the narrative structure which is based on a dual cosmological world-view and the fabulous elements that are attributed to characters and situations. The use of extended metaphor occurs sparingly and could be incidental; the personification of names, the narrative and the fabulous levels of allegory are, however, phenomenal in Adili na Nduguze, Kusadikika and Kufikirika. Robert's success in the use of allegory emanates from the fact that he understands how the mode works, but also because his world-view and the world-view of his readership recognize allegorical messages and how they should be interpreted.

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## Chapter Four

### Shaaban Robert - The Later Works.

In the last chapter, we saw how Shaaban Robert uses allegory in Adili na Nduguze, Kusaukika and Kufikirika. We argued that Shaaban Robert uses the allegorical mode effectively partly because he is adept at handling it and also because he is in an environment which irresistibly draws him towards using it. As a result of this, Shaaban Robert has portrayed non-realistic situations and characters in his earlier works. These characters' actions and motivations are concatenated to unchanging moral constructs which inform Shaaban Robert's religious beliefs.

This chapter examines Shaaban Robert's Utubora Mkulima and Siku Ya Watenzi Wote, his latest prose works. The most dominant feature in these books is that the use of allegory is less than in the earlier works we have studied. The latter of the two works, Siku Ya Watenzi Wote uses even less allegory. Apart from this, Utubora Mkulima and Siku Ya Watenzi Wote are realistic in that the author deals with characters and situations we can concretely identify with. Some of the situations that Shaaban Robert identifies with are contemporary with himself. In Adili na Nduguze, Kusadikika and Kufikirika

the author's basic concern is to teach morals based on the non-realistic characters and situations he creates; in Utubora Mkulima and Siku Ya Watenzi Wote, the author does not only intend to teach morals, but he is also interested in the behaviour, motivations and actions of characters. The places that the author mentions in the later works are not as arbitrary as the ones we find in the earlier works.

The society and characters with which the author deals are finite in space and time. We can clearly see that it is between the period after the Second World War and sometime after Tanzania's Political independence. Another feature which clearly comes out of the later works is that Shaaban Robert's concern for human beings is less theocentric and more anthropocentric. In the earlier works, human beings are asked to do good mainly because they are near the super-natural Being and He approves of it. Utubora Mkulima and Siku ya Watenzi Wote are more anthropomorphic in the sense that Shaaban Robert tends to see problems and solutions in the terms of man himself, without instantaneous allusion to the Super-natural precedent. Siku Ya Watenzi Wote in particular, depicts Shaaban Robert's increasing aversion to the church and the Mosque as the custodians of morality and justice.



We want to argue that Shaaban Robert depicts themes and characters as they actually seem to be through the less use of allegory. Utubora Mkulima is about Shaaban Robert's conception of a perfect human being. Utubora Mkulima leaves Zanzibar for Burma, where he gets involved in war. In the meantime, Utubora has been betrothed to his employer's daughter. Utubora comes back from Burma disillusioned by the agonies of war. Besides, Sheha has deserted him for another rich man. Utubora decides to leave for the countryside, where he believes the humanistic attributes of human beings belong. He meets people such as Radhia with whose personalities he identifies and others like Makuu who for him do not represent his idea of a perfect human being. In Mrima, Utubora exhibits humanistic characteristics which make him likeable to everyone he meets. He also strives to behave in a manner that does not cause suffering to others. As a result, Utubora naturally falls in love with Radhia, who had been betrothed to Makuu. Eventually, Radhia leaves Makuu and happily marries Utubora.

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Shaaban Robert uses allegorical names to show his support for his humanism and his aversion for anti-humanism. As we have already pointed out, Utubora is

Shaaban Robert's personification of a perfect human being. "Utubora" which means 'good personality' to Shaaban Robert refers to: "all good attributes that make a human being pointedly humane"<sup>1</sup>. These include being clean morally and physically, being respectful to others, showing ingenuity and intelligence in one's conversations and arguments, accustoming oneself to meditative moments accepting responsibility and exhibiting philanthropy. In spite of the fact that Shaaban Robert's protagonist in Utubora Mkulima is at times annoyed and frustrated due to the human problems he encounters, he strives to live up to his ideals. Utubora Mkulima lives a life that satisfies him individually as well as being perpetually agreeable to other human beings around him.

That Shaaban Robert gives Utubora another name "Mkulima", which means 'farmer' shows the writer's admiration of agriculture. The author associates farming with humanism by subordinating its origin and practice to the Pristine attributes of man:

I have left my clerical job  
here in Zanzibar. We will go  
to Mrima and there, we will  
live on the sweat of our hands  
and faces just as Adam did.<sup>2</sup>

The conventional religious view that 'farming' is associated with the curse arising out of man's rebellion against God does not seem to bother Shaaban Robert.<sup>13</sup> He argues that farming is natural to man, a noble act by which man is defined. Shaaban Robert's assumption is also that man was created for a basically rural habitation. Although the author criticizes urbanisation for alienating man from meditating about the Creator<sup>4</sup>, we know from the text the urban situation deters Utubora from realizing his humanity to the full. Utubora leaves the city for the rural area partly to fulfill this self-assertiveness and more relevantly because he finds more peace in the countryside than in the town. Utubora's affective attachment to the land is depicted in the name 'Busutamu', the place for which he is leaving the city. The name literally means 'sweet kiss' and implies the fresh surrounding that Utubora is going to live in. It may also refer to the actual sweet kiss that utubora gets after his marriage to Radhia. Busutamu is also meant to pacify Utubora after experiencing the traumatic agonies of the war. Utubora is quoted as saying:

/

I intend to settle in the countryside. Perhaps this is as a result of the war which has made me dislike the town and any office work. I am not happy here in Zanzibar. I want time to relax, I want the free atmosphere.... I want to hear birds sing and livestock groan.<sup>5</sup>

Apart from Utubora's exaltation of farming and a rural life as a mark of one's essential humanity, his name expresses his other roles in the text. He radiates moral attributes that Shaaban Robert best admires:

He was stable in such tempting situations as the ones that prompted meanness of spirit; resistant to temptation such as bribery.... He was faithful like daylight and a trustworthy confidante.<sup>6</sup>

Utubora's character is idealistic. Shaaban Robert romanticizes him because the author yearns for all human beings to act as Utubora does and also because, he himself is continually groping towards the perfect. By comparing Utubora's honesty to daylight, the author attests to Utubora's representativeness of all that is

positive and all that makes a human being superior to all other forms of existence. while Utubora behaves considerately to negative characters such as Makuu and Sheha, he does not compromise his fundamental beliefs.

Masters and servants are natural in Shaaban Robert's world; they have mutual respect for one another. Their relationship is not visualized in economic terms but in their unquestionable acceptance of their respective positions. What matters is the humane relationship that exists between them. That seems to be the reason why Utubora and Bihaya are loyal to each other in their roles as master and servant respectively. Bihaya's name has something to do with respect. The significance of the Kiswahili word haya in this context is the element in Bihaya of not saying all at ago as a result of the respect she has for Utubora. Bihaya's shyness, which is inseparable from the connotation in her name is according to the author a virtue; a virtue because it makes one has respect for the self. It is this affiliation with virtue rather than economic strata that good personalities are identified in Utubora Mkulima.

Bi. Mkubwa's name refers to the respect and the pre-eminent place she occupies in her house. It is ironical that despite the honour that is bestowed upon her, she is unhappy. It takes Utubora's altruism patiently and for a long time before he heals the psychic scar she suffers from as a result of the death of her grandson. Eventually, her liveliness is resurrected and she does not want to be separated from Utubora, the person who has resurrected it. Bi. Mkubwa's initial unhappiness and loneliness disturbs Radhia's peace of mind as well. Her name, denoted by 'Radhia', is derived from 'radhi', "the ability of one's soul to be satisfied by the actions of another person" 'Radhia' is the stative form of 'radhi' and implies the ability to cause one to be content and satisfied. That Radhia is deeply troubled by the solitude of Bi. Mkubwa implies that she would be happy if Bi. Mkubwa's condition were improved. This becomes clear when she totally agrees with Utubora in his struggle to raise up Bi. Mkubwa's vivacity and interest in life.

Radhia does not, however, agree with Makuu on the issue of Bi. Mkubwa's solitary life. Makuu does not see as his responsibility the attempt

to help Bi. Mkubwa commune with other human beings. In response to Radhia's expression of sympathy for Bi. Mkubwa, he says:

Why do you worry about her?  
She is not in any problems worth  
of being sympathised with. She  
has a lot of money and if  
she wants to lead a lonely life,  
I think she loves loneliness.

Despite the fact that Radhia does not openly oppose Makuu, she quietly disagrees with him on this fact. She continually wishes for a change of heart on the part of Bi. Mkubwa. Radhia also brings about the consummation of Utubora's life through his marriage to her. This is an important stage in a good personality's life, for as we have shown earlier, Shaaban Robert's main positive characters have to end up in marriage. Radhia satisfies Utubora maritally so to speak. Her name allegorically expresses her role. Both Utubora and Radhia mix freely with people of various temperaments. Through them, Shaaban Robert shows how his perfect character can live in this world by precept and example without flouting his beliefs.

Utubora and Radhia are the anti-theses of Makuu and Sheha. Makuu initiates and reinforces the impression of pompous self importance which he gains from his speech and manner. 'Makuu' implies a tendency towards snobbery and status-hunting. His reaction towards Utubora's departure from Zanzibar tells this vividly and compulsively:

Please, tell me what you are doing here? You have turned into a farmer, haven't you? Are you joking or you are serious? You don't have a job! Or is something else up your sleeves?

His expression portrays him as a light-hearted individual, a "bonvivant" with no love for introspection. Because he has a lot of money, Makuu is too sure of himself to be serious about life. He cannot even comprehend that his views and behaviour have alienated him from Radhia - who is about to decamp from him. Makuu's name personifies what he does. But he does not represent negative qualities throughout. Much later in the text, when Makuu meets Utubora, he does not change the basic characters by which we identify him but he talks to Utubora with a little humility. Makuu does not dominate the conversation the way he does earlier and is ready concede where his reasoning is faulty.



This ability on the part of Shaaban Robert to depict characters who are fairly objective is also shown in the way he moulds his Utubora. That Utubora naturally and irresistibly falls in love with Radhia when he is well aware of her engagement to Makuu testifies to the farmer's human characteristics. He acts humanly in that he damns Sheha for her failure to keep the promise of marrying him; but at the same time, he also stands condemned by Makuu for taking his betrothed without much feeling.

What we see in Shaaban Roberts' work here is a gradual transition from the basically automatic character in the earlier works to a character who is motivated by his free-will to act the way he does. This thesis argues that this transition is tied up with the writer's stripping off of the narrative and the fabulous levels of allegory in Utubora Mkulima. Adili in Adili na Nduguze, Karama in Kusadikika and Utubusara-ujingahasara in Kufikirika do not live full lives. They represent ideas and remain clothed in those allegorical roles without sharing in other characters' day to day's hopes, fears and frustrations. Prophet-like, they play their big roles and disappear without sharing in the common run of other mortals. In Utubora Mkulima we find a character who represents what Shaaban Robert best admires but also who lives a fuller life than the characters we find in the

earlier works. Shaaban Robert's harmonization of the physical appearance of his main characters to their inner consciousness, their moral stances and their ultimate beliefs in Utubora Mkulima and as we will see later, in Siku ya Watenzi Wote, becomes a vehicle of intensifying our appreciation of the human qualities the characters are there to represent. This is different from the 'totality of objects' we see in the previous chapter of which the aim is to make non-realistic characters and situations maintain an internal consistency.

Siku Ya Watenzi Wote is Shaaban Robert's vision of Tanganyika as an independent state ten years afterwards. The story is centred on four main characters. Yussuf, a lawyer who has just come from Britain where he had gone to study for ten years; Binti Akili, Ayub's aunt; Sarah, the fifteen-year-old daughter of Binti Akili cousin; Ayub, the exponent of a movement, which according to Shaaban Robert, will solve all the problems of the world. There are many minor characters in the text who include: the destitute and down-trodden women, the workers of the 'community Morality'<sup>10</sup>, rich people and professionals in various fields of human endeavour.

Yussuf, who has been a way, comes back to find an independent Tanganyika. He discovers that independence has not brought hope but disillusionment to the majority of the people. Abject poverty exists in juxtaposition with gross affluence. After attending a few meetings organized by the Community of Morality, he is convinced that the society is the only cure for post-independence problems. In the meantime, Ayub goes around Dar es Salaam helping those in various problems, in particular by preaching to them the tenets of community of morality

In the course of his rounds, he meets Sarah at Binti Akili's house. Sarah is a romantic rich youth. Though she feels guilty for being affluent in the midst of destitution, she alleviates this by being generous and giving help to the poor. Her concern with the plight of the poor is depicted in her intention to give up all her wealth to the Community of Morality. Ayub refuses the intended donation because according to his code, she is bound to give a tenth of her wealth but not to render herself bankrupt in her attempt to assuage the plight of the poor. Ayub and Sarah fall in love. Binti Akili eventually dies leaving her will to them. Ayub and Sarah get married in a ceremonious wedding and spent their lives to the service of the Community of Morality .

In Siku Ya Watenzi Wote, Shaaban Robert delineates the disparity between pre-independence hopes and post-uhuru frustrations in Tanganyika in particular and in other parts of Africa in general. That his book is visionary indicates that experiences outside of Tanganyika inspire him to anticipate problems in his own country after independence. The author depicts a Tanganyika plagued by poverty, exploitation and injustices. His sympathy with the poor is shown in the description of a woman, who has three children and lives on a wage of fifty shillings per month:

She gets fifty shillings every month for thrashing grain at the mill. Until recently, she and her children used to live in a hut for which she paid a monthly rent of ten shillings. That hut has now been pulled down without any compensation. The government people had said it was unhygienic for so many to live and sleep in such a small hut. She had to hire two rooms in the government quarters at a rate of thirty shillings per month; that is, she would be left with only twenty shillings per month; that is, monthly food bills. They were to have only one bedroom and the bed must be placed near the window while the other room was closed every night. Such observances were unnecessary in the old hut. As a result, they were already declining in health due to malnutrition and sleeping in overcrowded conditions. In spite of this, the government people were satisfied because they were able to rent out

two rooms instead of one, albeit spacious, hut.11

The government is shown in this scene as aggravating rather than alleviating the disinherited conditions of the poor. This is disillusioning on the part of Shaaban Robert and explains why he is in search of a permanent solution to the world's ills.

In fact, early in his writing, Robert recognizes that his society has few haves and many havenots. The writer does not conceive of the relationship between these groups of people in terms of the exploitation of the poor by the rich with its attendant class struggle. Fundamentally, the author believes that riches is willed by God and it is up to the rich to help the poor out of their plight in cognizance of the favour God has bestowed upon. It is against this background that Shaaban Robert in this case, contends that a strike action leads to greater suffering than to solving the problems of the poor:

Brave men can go on strike for better salaries. If such strikes go on until the economy cannot sustain them any longer, they lead to the raising of the price of nearly all commodities needed by the poor, who are then left in a helpless condition.12

From the foregoing excerpt, there emerges an increasing scepticism on the part of Shaaban Robert as to how the problems of the down-trodden should be solved. He partly sees the strike as a viable weapon of improving the lives of the poor. At the same time, he is continually haunted

by the Community of Morality, an "earthly utopia", as the most appropriate solution to the problems of the underprivileged.

Closely related to the theme of exploitation and poverty in Siku ya Watenzi Wote is the theme of the liberation of women. Shaaban Robert is completely riled by the discrimination of women both in law and in public service. This attitude is nourished by a cultural order that practically puts the woman in a subservient position to the extent of being denied self-knowledge:

Hearken, ye males! How long will you continue to perpetuate the myth that if you manage to keep the head of woman under a black veil - If you keep her engulfed in patronizing feminine 'security' you can keep her satisfied and happy, while keeping her in ignorance about the other facets of life? How do you expect a condition that would not satisfy a tame beast to satisfy a human being.<sup>13</sup>

In the above shown instance, Shaaban Robert attacks those elements of his people's culture that deter women from developing their potential for leading better lives. What the author does here is to strip off from his culture some accretions of past centuries for the purposes of allowing human beings to realize their other-worldly characters. Thus, Shaaban Robert indities the society from which he came for the attitude of women. Later on, he insists that women should fight for voting rights and representation in the government.<sup>14</sup>

To solve the problems that he depicts, Shaaban Robert conceptualises the community of morality' as the author of fundamental solutions. He urges that the gap between the rich and the poor will be dissolved through the ecumenism of religions. The 'community of morality' is. Shaaban Robert's idea of this religious unity:

The solution to all the world's  
ills lies in the union of all  
faiths which will come about  
through religious unity.<sup>15</sup>

Shaaban Robert's idea is syncretic in that it cuts right across religious and denominational boundaries. This emanates from his feeling that the religions about which he knows, particularly Islam and Christianity have not satisfied the needs of their adherents:

The Church and the Mosque  
are defeated. They lead  
people to the cross and the  
Jihad and leave them there.  
On our part, we want to take them  
them beyond, in their lives  
and even to resurrection.<sup>16</sup>

In other words, Islam and Christianity promise physical suffering to their followers without any glimmer of happiness in their quest for spiritual salvation.

Ayub, the character through whom Shaaban Robert proposes the 'Community of Morality' appears to cater for this need in his followers. The driving force behind Ayub's organization is not only to prepare man for eternal life, but also to make life in this world worthwhile. Ayub takes more time to comfort the down-trodden and solicit for donations to help the poor than to pray. The evolution of Shaaban Robert's views from orthodox Islam to be the Community of Morality is fundamentally predicated to the super-natural Being; but it is more humanistic than orthodox Islam as he understands it.

Shaaban Robert hardly uses allegory in Siku ya Watenzi Wote. The storyline of the text need not be understood on a dual ontological universe. There are, however, few flashes of allegorical use of names at the personification level. Ayub's title is 'Adilia'. As the case is with Adili in Adili na Nduguze, Ayub's pre-occupation is with the establishment of virtues. As we have already pointed out, Ayub is concerned with both the physical and the spiritual needs of people as a preparation of life in the hereafter. His title expresses his vocation.



That Shaaban Robert gives the name Ayub to the proponent of his ideas is significant to the understanding of his philosophy in Siku ya Watenzi Wote. In the Koran, Ayub is a prophet of great renown who suffers affliction as a result of Satan's temptations.<sup>17</sup> The prophet, however, triumphs over every trial that Satan puts to him. Instead of yielding to worldly wants and pleasures, Ayub unswervingly, suffering without bitterness, prays to God. In the end, he is bountifully rewarded.

The Ayub of Siku ya Watenzi Wote is also a perfect character. But Robert does not perpetually subject him to physical suffering and prayer. If he suffers at all, it is a psychological level, particularly in his potraiture of sympathy to the poor. Otherwise, he is a physically attractive character whose physical appearance illuminates our understanding of him as a physically healthy man and as a morally virtuous person. It is quite probable that through this character who is both physically and spiritually clean, Shaaban Robert depicts his concept of the Community of Morality. This is alienated from the Islamic orthodox view in which Ayub is subjected to continual physical suffering as a way of attaining salvation. The use of the name Ayub intensifies our appreciation of the character's actions without

necessarily requiring allegorical interpretation.

Another person whose name implies something of her character is Binti Akili. She is portrayed both as a lively and intelligent old woman. She does not tire of conversing intelligently with other characters such as Yussuf and her understanding of Ayub and Sarah's ideas is exceptional. 'Akili' literally means 'brain'. Apparently, Shaaban Robert uses this name to illustrate the character's actions.

Apart from Ayub and Binti-Akili, other characters' names in Siku Ya Watenzi Wote do not carry any semantic content to our understanding; they are just proper-nouns. In this chapter, we have shown that Shaaban Robert uses allegory at the personification level alone. The personification of names of characters and places appears more in Utubora Mkulima than in Siku Ya Watenzi Wote.

END NOTES

1. Kadenge Kazungu defined the word 'utubora' which means 'humanism' as such in his conversation with me.
2. Shaaban Robert, Utubora Mkulima, Nairobi: Nelson and Sons, 1968, p.13
3. The Koran and Bible teach that man was condemned to eat through the sweat of his brow.
4. Op. Cit., p. 19
5. Ibid., p. 3
6. Ibid., p. 1
7. Kamusi Ya Kiswahili Sanifu.  
Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press and  
Institute of Kiswahili Research, University  
of Dar es Salaam, 1981, p.238
8. Op. Cit., p. 27
9. Ibid., p. 34
10. The name given to the organization which is supposed to provide solutions to all the world's ills.
11. Majola Mbele, Ed., Viewpoints: Essays on Literature and Drama, Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1980  
pp. 27-28
12. Shaaban Robert., Siku Ya Watenzi Wote, Surrey:  
Nelson and Sons, 1968, p. 5
13. Op. Cit., p.64

14. Op. Cit., p. 136
15. Op. Cit., p. 125
16. Op. Cit., p. 16
17. J.W. T. Allen, Tendi, Nairobi: Heinemann, 1971,  
pp. 370 - 377

## Chapter Five

### CONCLUSION

The first chapter of this study is a crystallization of the research proposal. In it, we have traced the problem leading to the work we have done. We have chosen to examine allegory in Robert's prose and not his poetry because already the writer's poetry has received more scholarly attention than his prose. Secondly, from the initial pilot study we have ascertained that the data appropriate for this thesis is Shaaban Robert's use of allegory in his prose works.

In this thesis, we have used an established convention in the understanding of terms that emerge from the study. We have relied on authorities and what those authorities have said about allegory. Descriptive techniques of criticism have also been used. Data have been analyzed based on our understanding of them on their own merit.

The thesis reveals that Kiswahili literary criticism is inadequate in its analysis of allegory as a mode of expression and as used by Shaaban Robert. There is a lack of consensus and a pervasive confusion among critics in Kiswahili regarding a term that is equivalent to the English understanding of allegory. This is apparent in how ineffectively the mode has been dealt with. Consequently, in this study, we have turned to works that use allegory elsewhere, especially in the western literary tradition. Our description of allegory from the Greek antiquity to the medieval and sixteenth century European

writers reveals that it operates best as a mode of imparting moral lessons.

From our analysis, allegory is a technique of creating, translating or interpreting literary works so that they convey more than one level of meaning simultaneously. Various ramifications of the mode have been identified. A part from allegory being seen as the usage of character' and place-names connotatively, it is a one to one correspondence of the story as it appears and its literary significance. Secondly, we have envisioned the use of extended metaphors as an aspect of allegory. A final element of allegory we identify is the fantastic and monstrous situation, to which characters are continually subjected.

One fact stands out in regard with allegory as a mode of expression; despite the rare analysis of allegory in the criticism of literature in Kiswahili, it is similar to that in the Western view of the mode. Both acknowledge a dual ontological universe in its interpretation. In allegory, the world is recognized as a physical as well as a metaphysical reality, and as capable of being understood at more than one level of interpretation.

The second chapter examines the literary biography of Shaaban Robert. The chapter shows that a writer's creative work is, in many ways, influenced by his actual experiences in life and his beliefs. We look at the African, political, literary and religious environment

that informs his artistic efforts. Robert was proud of his being African. His parents taught him the customs of his people. He was educated in the traditional sense by being exposed to the proverbs, similes and narratives of his people.

Politically, the writer was affected by the colonial situation. This situation provides stylistic models on which the author's early fiction was constructed. At the same time, his situation shows that the African was compelled by the colonial government to write in line with colonialist aims. While the colonial government wanted to develop Kiswahili for administration, this need was limited in scope and depth. Shaaban Robert transcends these limitations. He criticizes colonial policies by the use of allegory. Finally, Islamic religious attitudes and assumptions provide the ultimate point of reference of Shaaban Robert's ideas and beliefs. Thus, the author's social environment influenced him by providing parameters within which he operated.

Chapter three shows how the writer used allegory in the early works. Adili na Nduguze, Kusadikika and Kufikirika exhibited the four ramifications of the mode aforementioned in chapter one. These were the personification, narrative, metaphorical and fabulous levels. The author used these various ramifications of allegory to depict his ideals. He created infinite characters in space and time. The result is that we had characters who were flat and non-realistic. The presenta-

tion helped Shaaban Robert to adapt his characters to unchanging moral constructs.

In chapter four, we analyzed Shaaban Robert's Utubora Mkulima and Siku ya Watenzi Wote. These works are different from the early ones in that in them, the author used personification allegory alone. The latter of the two works had only two characters whose names are alliterical. Although this did not change Robert's didactic purpose, it allowed his characters to roam freely within realistic parameters. Besides, we had characters who were finite in space and time and who were multi-faceted.

The first chapter demonstrated that at present, allegory could be subsumed to multifarious forms. In Shaaban Robert's case, however, it became increasingly clear that the use of allegory was tied to the transition of his characters dimensionally and his changing perspectives of the world. The more Robert moved away from the allegorical mode, the more he strove to create vivid and realistic characters. This change of the writer's way of creating characters was directly proportional to his changing world-view; the more he moulded realistic characters, the more he expressed his doubt as to the morality on which his society is based. Shaaban Robert's use of allegory confirmed the relationship between matter and manner of presentation. That a writer chooses an appropriate idiom and that this idiom changes relative to his pre-occupations is amply and lucidly demonstrated



in this study.

We have shown how Shaaban Robert uses allegory in his imaginative literature. But this task has not been accomplished without weaknesses. For the description of allegory as a mode of literary expression, we relied on critics and writers from the West. This may have alienated the Kiswahili reader from appreciating the worth of this mode when it came to its use in Robert's prose. Secondly, we found it difficult to translate some of the passages, especially Robert's very poetic prose into English.

Notwithstanding these weaknesses, we have written a work which we believe will add to what is already there to give Shaaban Robert his true place in Kiswahili prose fiction. We stated at the outset of this thesis that a majority of prose writers in Kiswahili use allegory in their writing. Now that Shaaban Robert's use of the mode has been examined, it would be worthwhile for researchers to undertake a study of the latter writers' use of the same mode. It is probable that through such an exercise a literary theory on which prose writing in Kiswahili is based will be established.

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APPENDIX OF END-NOTES IN THE ORIGINAL  
TEXTS.

CHAPTER ONE

6. Majazi ni itumiaji wa majina yanayobainisha tabia au hali ya muhusika au mji au kazi za kitu. Kwa mfano, katika kitabu cha S.A. Mohamed, Asali Chungu, Muhusika mkuu anaitwa Dude. Jina hili linadhihirisha hali mbovu ya muhusika huyu na namna asivyothaminiwa... Lakini mwandishi aliyemitumia sana mbinu hii ya fasihi ya Kiswahili ni Shaaban Robert.
7. Tamathali hii ni aina ya sitiari ambayo itajapo sehemu tu ya kitu hapo hapo, sehemu hiyo huashiria na kuwakilisha kitu hicho.
8. Kwa kawaida, tamathali hii huwa ni masimulizi yatumiayo ishara ambayo maana yake hujitokeza pia katika masimulizi.

CHAPTER TWO

4. Baba yake alikuwa Robert Juma Ufukwe, mama yake Mwema Binti Mwidau. Walimpenda na Kumwamini hata wakamsimulia mambo mengi yahusuyo mila na desturi za ndani.

6. Kazi yangu katika serikali tlibarikiwa na mahamisho mengi, lakini maendeleo yalikuwa machache. Nilihamishwa idara baada ya idara... katika cheo cha ukarani tu.
  
7. Kazi hii, Utenzi wa Vita Vya Uhuru, ndiyo Kazi yake kubwa kushinda zote .  
Anasimulia kwa beti 3000 historia ya vita kuu ya pili.... Utenzi huu unaonyesha bayana kuwa Afrika iliathiriwa vile vile na vita hivi ingawaje kinafsia Mwafrika hakuathiriwa kama vile Mzungu. Utenzi huu, ukiwa ni mrefu kupita zote zilizopata kuandikwa katika Kiswahili, unaonyesha kwa undani jinsi mwandishi wa Kiafrika aliyeheshimika katika taifa lake alivyoiona historia ya vita hivi na mkabala wa mataifa yaliyokuwa yakipigana.
  
8. Adolf Hitler alipotangaza vita katika 1939 Katika dunia, ushairi ulinihitaji nimbbe tokeo lote la vita. Nilijipurukusha sana nisifanye hivyo lakini sikuweza.... Niliona kuwa sina dharura njema ya kuniweka kitako kimya kama bubu

wakati vita ilipokuwa ikishungulisha watu wote katika dunia. Heri ya watu hao ilikuwa heri yangu, na msiba wao ulikuwa ni msiba wangu vilevile. Imenibidi kushirikiki katika tokea lile kwa namna yo yote niliyoweza.

9. Nilikuwa ni raia wa kiingereza na adui wa Jerumani wakati wote wa vita.
10. Jina hili katika kitabu hiki ni alama ya heshima kwa uzuri wa tabia na wema wake. Limeandikwa na mtumishi wake mnyenyekevu.
16. Moyo wangu uliyeyuka tamthili ya theluji chini ya jua juu ya mambo mengi ya nchi nikaona ilikuwa wajibu na heshima kwangu kusaidia kuratibu na kujenga usitawi kama walivyotenda wengine.

18. Ngurumo za madai ya haki  
za binadamu zilitingisha mioyo  
ya watu wa kila namna; ukelele  
wa uhuru ulikuwa katika kila  
pembe ya nchi Uganda, Kenya  
Zanzibar, Tanganyika na kila  
pahali katika Afrika.
22. ... Wasifu wa Binti Saad ni johari  
njema ya utu na utukufu.  
Licha ya kuonyesha aina ya  
kina mama watakiwao Afrika  
Mashariki, tunafahamishwa kwamba  
mtu ni mtu na ana nyota yake  
ya maisha. Jitihada ndicho chombo  
cha maendeleo, na mtu  
akosapo dawa si kukata tamaa  
bali kuongeza juhudi na nguvu.
24. Kazi ya mwanamke si utii  
Hutaka usawa wa cheo na haki  
Mwanamke wa sasa ni asi.
34. Nilikata ikiwezekana kuwahijiana  
na bahati uso kwa uso mbele ya  
hadhara siyo mafichoni. Yamkini,

mtauliza, ulingoja bahati gani?  
Bahati niliyokuwa nikingoja  
ilikuwa ni ya kutenda jambo  
lisilo aibu mbele ya watu  
katika maisha yangu yote.  
Ikiwa kabla ya umri wangu  
wa sasa nilipata kutenda  
aibu ambayo mimi sifahamu  
inayokumbukwa na mwengine,  
nilitaka nisitende tena  
aibu hiyo katika wakati wangu  
ujao.

35. Huyu ni mmoja wa waalimu  
wakuu na waandishi bora  
kabisa wa kifaransa.

### CHAPTER THREE

1. Mambo hasa yanayotiliwa mkazo  
ndani yake ni ardhi na mimea  
yake; machimbo na hazina zake;  
Mifugo na mazao yake; biashara  
na faida yake; safari na manufaa  
yake; utajiri na baraka yake;  
ahali na heshima zao, na  
Ndugu na matendo yao.

4. Sema na mtu kwa maneno mazuri kwa madhumuni ya kumtaka akubali kutimiza linalotarajiwa; bembeleza; sairiri; sihi.
  
6. Mafundisho juu ya wema, haki na wajibu maonyesho au mafunzo yatolewayo katika namna ya hadithi au shairi yakiwa na nia ya kufundisha.
  
7. Waziri wa kusadikika alikuwa mtu mwenye haiba kubwa na uhodari mwingi. Kwa hivi aliitwa Majivuno.
  
10. "Mtukufu"
  
11. Kichwa chake kilikuwa na ubongo wa hekima, kifuani alikuwa na moyo wa ushujaa na kinywani ulimi wa ufasaha.  
/
  
14. Elimu ya hukumu kwa mujibu wa sheria zilizokubaliwa.



18. Lila na Fila hawatangamani  
Kinywa cha Lila kikisema ,  
sikio la Fila hujidai halisikii,  
Jicho la Lila likiona, lile la  
Fila hujifanya halioni, Moyo  
wa Lila ukijilainisha kwa mapenzi  
na huruma, ule wa Fila hujifanya  
mgumu kama jiwe lisilo maisha  
kwa chuki na uadui.

19. Kwa desturi, maisha huwaficha  
watu wake bora mpaka tokeo  
kubwa litokee.

20 Wafalme hukutana na mambo  
magumu kabisa katika maisha  
yao. Wako walioanza maisha  
katika unyonge na dharau  
wakapanda mpaka juu ya kilele  
cha heshima na utukufu,  
waliozuka katika usahaulifu  
wakajitia katika makumbusho  
ya milele .... Lakini wako  
wafalme waliopata kukutana,  
kama Rai, na daawa kati  
ya watu na majini.

22. Mhusika huyo alikuwa na  
nguvu za ajabu na ujasiri  
usio wa kawaida, na  
alitambuliwa kwa urahisi

kutokana na sifa za uadilifu,  
nguvu na akili ambazo haikuwa  
na mpaka; mhusika ambaye  
alikuwa na hali ya ajabu  
nguvu za kiungu , majaribu  
magumu na aghalabu hamu  
isiyovia ya kutimiza lengo lake.

23. Amini alishuka katika ardhi  
kwa msaada uliopatikana kwa  
hila kwa Mangera, ndege wakubwa  
kabisa walishao katika Ardhi  
lakini walalo kusadikika. Wakati  
wa kwenda chini, Amini alijifunga  
bila ya kujulikana juu ya paja la  
Mangera aliyekuwa amelala  
fofofo usiku. Kulipokucha  
ndege huyu aliamnka akaruka  
chini.

27. Halmashauri hizo zililindwa sana ili zisisogelewe na upelelezi wa kiumbe mwingine ye yote ila malaika. Walakini mjumbe wetu alisikia kuwa pengine zilinyemelewa kwa siri sana na Mashetani kwa kusudi la kusikiliza mambo yaliyokuwa yakisemwa huko. Kisha mashetani hao walishuka chini kwa umbea. Umbea huo ulienezwa Kusadikika na nchi nyingine nyingi na Mashetani hao ili kuuthibitisha Uwezo wao kwa watu waliowaamini kuwa walikuwa na nguvu na elimu juu ya mambo yote.

#### CHAPTER FOUR

1. Sifa zote nzuri  
Zinazomwajibikia  
binadamu.
2. Kazi nimeiacha, yaani  
kazi yangu ya ukarani hapa

Unguja, nasi tutakwenda  
Mrima, mimi na wewe  
tukakae kama Adamu alivyoishi  
kwa kazi ya mikono ya jasho  
la vipaji vyetu wenyewe.

5. Nakusudia nikakae shamba.  
Nadhani ni matokeo ya vita  
yanayonizua kuishi katika  
mji nikafanya kazi tena  
katika afisi, kwa sababu  
najiona sina raha hapa  
Unguja. Nataka wasaa,  
hewa ya wazi... nataka  
kusililiza ndege wakiimba  
na ng'ombe wakikoroma.

6. Alikuwa mtu imara mbele  
ya telezi nyingi kama vile  
hiana na mengine; , mvumilivu  
mbele ya majaribu magumu  
kama rushwa;... mwaminifu  
kama mchana; msiri kama  
usiku.

7. Hali ya nafsi kuridhika  
au na matendo  
ya mtu.
8. Kwa nini wahuzunika?  
Hayumo katika dhiki ya  
kusikitikiwa. Ana fedha nyingi,  
na kama ataka kukaa maisha  
ya upweke, mimi nafikiri  
anapenda upweke.
9. Ehe, niambie ufanyalo hapa,  
umejigeuza mkulima! mzaha  
au uhitaji hasa, huna kazi  
kweli au una neno jingine.
10. "Jumuiya ya Adili"
12. Wanaume washupavu huweza  
kugoma ili wapate mshahara  
bora na kwa migomo ya  
mfululizo kuliko ile ambayo  
sheria ya iktisadi huweza

kuhimili, wamepandisha  
thamani karibu ya kila  
kitu juu ya watu maskini  
ambao hawana kimbilio  
wala msaada.

16. Twafikiri kwamba hapo  
ndipo kanisa na msikiti  
viliposhindwa. Huwapeleka  
watu katika msalaba na  
jihadi vikawaacha huko.  
Tunataka kuwachukua mbele,  
katika uzima wao, na hata  
katika ufufuo.